NEW STATESMAN
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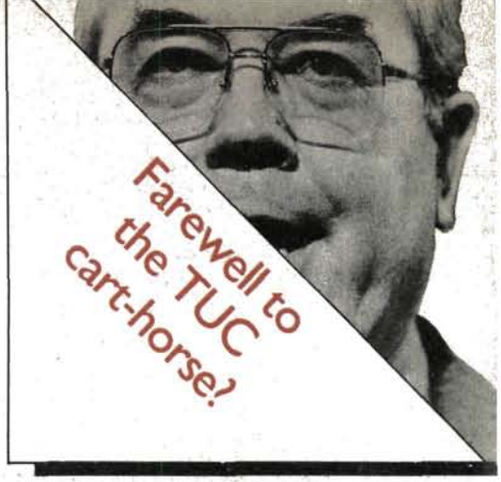
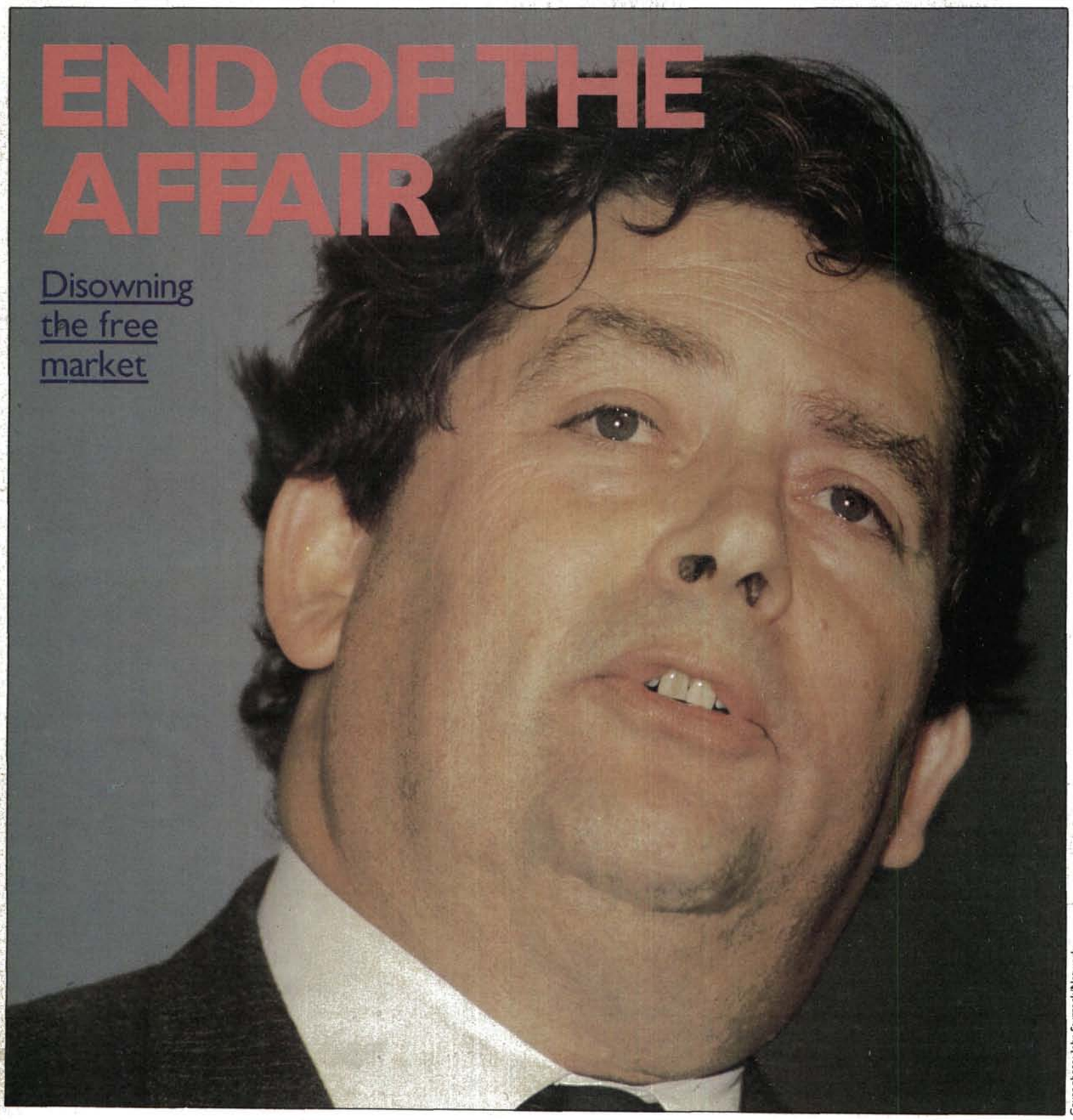
Alexander Cockburn: what Bush knows
Quixote's shield-bearer. **Carlos Fuentes**



Farewell to the TUC cart-horse?

END OF THE AFFAIR

Disowning the free market



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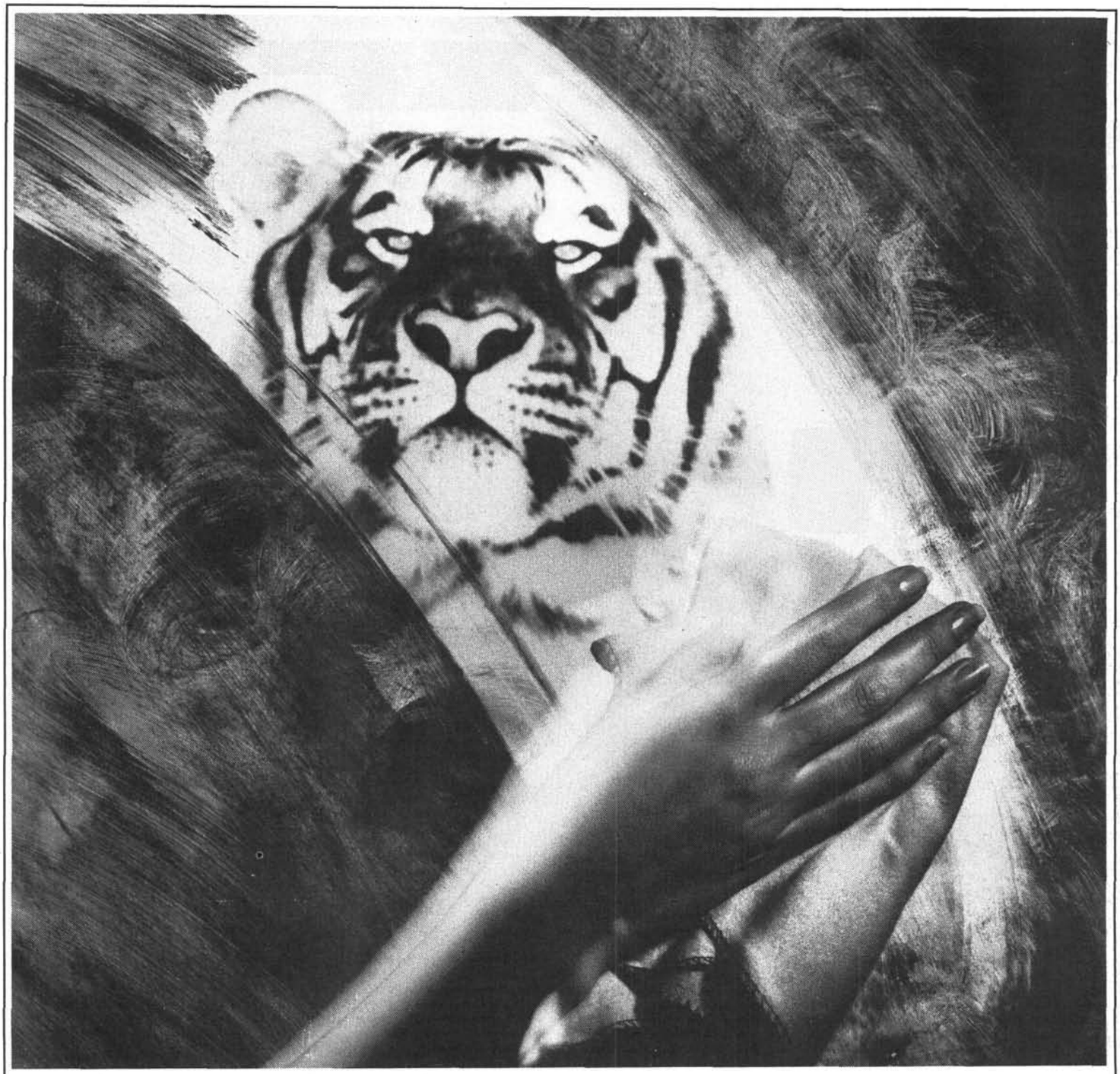

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

Francis Wheen: Diary 4
Edward Pearce: Howe's trials 8
Ben Pimlott: Solving the "moral" question 9
Will Hutton: An end to the affair with the free market 10
Anne Karpf: Television's insult to disability 13
John Reid: Why Labour must review reality 14
Duncan Campbell and Lyn Barlow: Coming out with Section 28 15
A. Sivanandan: The right to fight racism 16
John Lloyd: Productive trade unionism 20
Mary Kaldor: Poszgay on propelling Hungary into the open 21
Mark Thompson: Hungary's "new social initiatives" 22
Alexander Cockburn: View from the West 24

ESSAY

Miron Grindea: Carlos Fuentes talks about himself and other writers 26

BOOKS

Michael Moorcock: Has the left turned against Andrea Dworkin? 29
Martin Ince: Nuclear nightmares 30
Pat Coyne: The science of chaos 31
Roz Kaveney: Saints of romantic love 32
Sara Maitland: Isabelle Eberhardt 32
Charles Fox: Boris Vian on jazz 34
Jenny Diski: Surviving with guilt 35
Leslie Dick: Surviving with art 35
Steve Pinder: Tony Mason's *Sport in Britain* 36
Christine Orton: Women who care 36
Hilary Bichovsky-Little: Taking the lid off advertising 36

ARTS

Judith Williamson: *Swan Song* and the Chinese cinema 37
James Hall: Five woman show 38
W. Stephen Gilbert: Graphic television 39
Jon Savage: The politics of pop 40
Victoria Radin: Hallmark of the National 40

PLUS

Roger Woddis 4
Caption competition 6
Steve Bell: *WestEnders* 7
Letters 41
Doonesbury 42
Weekend crossword 46
Weekend competition 46
Christian Clark 47
Chess: George Botterill 47
This England 47

NEXT WEEK

Richesse oblige: David Marquand on the post-Thatcherite wave of socially responsible Toryism. *Plus* E.P. Thompson's first novel, *Sykaos Papers*, reviewed

The fire in Budapest

IN TWO weeks' time, the *New Statesman* joins forces with *New Society*. Naturally we mean to combine the best of both magazines. But the success of our merger will depend upon more than good intentions. The traditions of both weeklies must find their place in a new approach to politics, culture and social life.

If asked, we can summarise the essence of this new approach in a word: European. The new design — by David Hillman, of Pentagram — will have a European look, and the new paper a European outlook. Not because we are against what is best in radical writing in the British Isles, but because we can now take our place among the European peoples and our traditions must find their voice and life in this new context.

Europe is more than a multi-national entity. Historically, its regimes bear the responsibility for colonialism, two world wars, the holocaust and — if you include the Soviets as European — the Gulag.

But is the Soviet Union European? Perhaps its claim to such status is no better than that of the United States. Most North Americans speak European languages: Spanish, French and our own (even though English has long ceased to be our exclusive possession). And Washington has done more to shape Europe's destiny since 1945 than any single European capital. East and west, we Europeans share very different, but in their different ways, subordinate relations to the two superpowers whose division of Europe was the price for the military destruction of Nazism.

To be European is not just to be part of a divided continent. That description makes us seem like victims. The victims are in the third world, whose concerns have always been central to the *New Statesman* and will remain so in the *New Statesman and Society*.

How should we relate to the uneasy super-power condominium? How should Europe respond to the intensification of the Soviet-American *entente*, initiated by Gorbachev's new diplomacy and now symbolised by Reagan's visit to Moscow?

Part of the answer must depend upon the changes in the east. The character of Soviet reform is now being debated fiercely in these pages. The central question concerns whether or not it is possible for the state apparatus controlled by a single party machine to carry through "democratisation" to the point where individual rights and freedoms are reliably entrenched in law; to the point where political disagreements may be publicly argued and organised; to the point, in other words, where we can indeed begin to call their regimes democratic.

It is too early to predict the outcome; which makes it all the more necessary to attend closely to the developments now taking place in the countries that have the nerve to claim the proud values of socialism. In recent days a sharp reversal of form has taken place in eastern Europe. At the start of the eighties, Hungary was hailed as an example of a Communist economic miracle. It was a country where the standard of living began to equal if not the west's, then arguably the north of England's, while it was stifled politically. By contrast, the Polish economy was a disaster. Yet the Poles created and sustained perhaps the largest autonomous workers' movement ever known on the continent. As the Poles did badly but were thoroughly — magnificently — Polish, the Hungarians did well but were forbidden to be themselves.

Now Solidarity has been turned into a rag-tag army of dispirited proletarians while the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has mounted an astonishing conference, full of tension and surprise. Just as we welcomed the verve and radicalism of Solidarity, despite its allegiance to the Black Virgin and the Pope, so we should welcome the clear vote for reformists like Imre Poszgay, despite their Party allegiance. We urge this course, even though we are clear-eyed, and more so than the conventional media, about the palpable limits of their reformism. In this issue, Mary Kaldor interviews Poszgay and demonstrates those limits. As with Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, the reform tendency in Hungary are about democracy from above. And developments in society at large — "civil society" in the jargon of political thought — will be crucial to making Hungary democratic (see Mark Thompson's report from Budapest).

What will come of it? History suggests that the future course of Europe, certainly of eastern and central Europe, will be decided by developments in two countries. First, the Soviet Union, and second, Germany. Of all the countries in eastern Europe, the one where Gorbachev needs to see reform most of all, and perhaps the one which could turn it to the best advantage most swiftly, is the one where unreformed communism is most successfully entrenched: East Germany.

Europeans can only share a divided continent if we can share our different political lives across the divide. For this to happen, democracy is necessary throughout east Europe but above all in East Germany itself. We in west Europe cannot afford to wait upon the super-powers to resolve the future. We must seek to encourage democratic change in the east through all means available — political, economic, and people-to-people. Only when the east is democratic can we finally dispel the legacy of Hitler's dictatorship and its appeasement. □

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DIARY

I have received a letter from Julian Lewis, or Dr Julian Lewis as he likes to be known, moaning about my reference last week to Policy Research Associates, of which he is the Director. His gripe is that I described his extreme right-wing propaganda outfit as an "extreme right-wing propaganda outfit". He challenges me to justify this. ("Or," he asks, "are you just an irresponsible windbag?") Easy, I think. But then I notice that the wily Lewis — sorry, *Doctor* Lewis — has added a special condition: I must cite "examples of statements issued by PRA or by myself which can fairly be characterised as being on the extreme Right, as opposed to mainstream Conservative policy". This is a completely bogus distinction, of course, since mainstream Conservative policy is itself extremely right-wing nowadays. Lewis argues that "the designation 'extreme right-wing' generally has pro-Fascist/Nazi connotations". Not necessarily. I don't think Lewis is a Nazi or Fascist. He is merely an extreme right-winger, *tout simple*.

Half the point in describing Lewis thus is to provoke and annoy him, and I'm happy to see that it's worked. For years people of his political stripe haven't hesitated to characterise anyone of a mildly socialistic persuasion as an "extremist". But how they squeal and holler and stamp their feet when given a taste of their own medicine! Just what the Doctor ordered.

○

It is particularly amusing that the complainant should be Julian Lewis, of all people. For the benefit of younger readers it may be worth recalling a bit of history. In the mid-1970s Lewis joined Newham North-East Labour Party and organised a campaign to save Reg Prentice, the local MP, who had fallen out of favour with the party. Lewis presented himself as a mainstream Labour fellow fighting bravely against bedsitter entryists and Trotskyist infiltrators.

You may remember the sequel. A year or so later Prentice joined the Conservative Party — the Thatcher Conservative Party to boot. And a couple of years after that Lewis resurfaced at the head of the Coalition for Peace Through Security. It turned out that the only entryist in Newham North-East had been Julian Lewis himself: he had secretly been a Conservative all along.

○

A recent item from *Accountancy Age*, to which some kind reader has drawn my attention, deserves a wider audience. It concerns the accountancy firm Spicer & Oppenheim, sequestrators to the seafarers' union.

Spicers' senior partner had his farewell dinner the other day. The toast was proposed by Mark Sheldon, senior partner in City solicitors Linklaters & Paines. According to *Accountancy Age*, Sheldon "cast his eye over the food, wine and guests in Chartered Accountants' Hall and said: 'I can't think of a better use for the funds sequestered from the NUS.'"

○

A bizarre article by Peter Fuller is spread over three pages of the current issue of *Art Monthly*. Headlined "Overwheening Treachery, and Such Like", it is a reply to my recent suggestion on this page that Fuller, the former Marxist art critic, had allowed himself to be clasped to the bosom of the New Right. "The evidence Wheen published was as conclusive and unanswerable as that which, in another context, was offered against John Stalker," Fuller writes, exhibiting worrying delusions of martyrdom. "Wheen pointed out that I arrived at the Tate Gallery for the opening of the Bomberg exhibition in a chauffeur-driven limousine". His defence is simple: the limo and chauffeur were "my father-in-law's, actually". So that's all right then.

○

In my original item about Fuller I noted that he has deserted his old mentor John Berger and worships instead the shade of the late Kenneth Clark, a.k.a. Lord Clark of *Civilisation*. In his *Art Monthly* piece Fuller confirms as much. Indeed he goes further: Clark offers a good starting point "for the aesthetics of those of us who are socialist — as he himself was, and I remain . . ."

Was Kenneth Clark really a socialist? Alan Clark MP, his son, spluttered in amused disbelief when I told him what Fuller had written. "But Fuller's attacked my father on many occasions, for acquisitive collecting!" Ah yes, but Fuller's a friend of Roger Scruton these days, and that can do strange things to a person. Now then: was Lord Clark a socialist? "He did vote Labour in 1945, as did about 90 per cent of the population, and he rather liked Harold Wilson — he thought he was a bit of a card." But the idea that he was a socialist in any more serious sense — public ownership and so forth — well, to quote Alan Clark: "It's all balls. He never pursued it that far".

Just how far it did go is well measured in a glorious passage from *Another Part of the Wood*, the first volume of Kenneth Clark's memoirs. He describes the effect of reading Ruskin and Tawney as an undergraduate:

> It brought about a complete revolution in my mind. I didn't become a social worker; I knew that I had to follow my own line. I did not give away all my money, because I value independence above all things. I am not cut out to be a martyr and am almost incapable of moral indignation. But I have retained from those years of reading a hatred of exploitation that has grown through the years. The sight of a lot of people dining in the Savoy makes me feel sick. This is an emotional, almost physical, response and may seem like hypocrisy, because I am prepared to eat an expensive meal in a small restaurant.

Nevertheless, he concludes sweetly, there was a genuine dislike of power and display "somewhere at the back of my mind".

○

I have telephoned the Labour Coordinating Committee a couple of times this week, but without much to show for it. All I got was an answering machine that played a synthesised, anaesthetised version of the main theme from Brahms's First Symphony. This muzak also turns up continually on Labour Party political broadcasts these days. Brahms's First was on the stereo of Neil Kinnock's Ford Sierra when he had his famous car crash on the M4 in 1983, from which he emerged almost unscathed, and Kinnockites have been unswervingly convinced of its magical qualities ever since. For myself, I am now heartily sick of it.

○

Some years ago a man called Benjamin Creme announced that the World Teacher — Christ, Krishna, Buddha, whatever — had been living incognito as an Asian in the East End of London since 1977. The deity, best known as Maitreya, was biding his time until the moment when he would reveal himself. Now, suddenly, things are moving: one of Creme's associates, Patsy Pitchon, tells me that Maitreya's mission may begin openly in the next three or four weeks. First he will open some "youth centres". Then he will give a press conference. This will be followed by the Day of Declaration, when people all over the world will see his face on their television screens via satellite. "He won't speak but will deliver his message telepathically," Pitchon explains. "This will be very concrete proof that he is who he says he is."

Already, she tells me excitedly, he is no longer hiding his identity from those who recognise him. "Now if people come up to him in the street and say 'Are you Maitreya?' he says 'Yes I am.'" They then claim their five pounds, I presume.

Francis Wheen

ROGER WODDIS

A Hymn to Her

"We are told we must work and use our talents to create wealth. 'If a man will not work he shall not eat,' wrote St Paul to the Thessalonians." — St Margaret

When I survey the wondrous speech,
  Which held the gathered Kirk in thrall,
I marvel that she dared to preach
  A sermon borrowed from St Paul.

He urged the Thessalonians thus:
  Support the weak and those in need,
And do not quote the Word to us,
  Or wear it as a cloak for greed.

See in her eyes and hat so blue
  The naked face of moral guilt;
Did e'er such Sassenach so woo
  The heart that beats beneath the kilt?

Creating wealth, her sacred trust,
  Remains the truly Christian way;
What bothers them that dwell in dust
  Is their ability to pay.

Her credo is a cause to which
  The needy shall be sacrificed:
To succour the deserving rich,
  And do it in the name of Christ.

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What a great country

A LEAFLET headed "A Hundred Good Reasons Why South Africa is a Great Country" was surreptitiously distributed during a recent anti-apartheid meeting in Johannesburg. Good reason number one is the extraordinary claim that "there are more cars in Soweto than in the Soviet Union". Further down the list we learn that "South Africa's judiciary is totally independent and stands in high regard even among South Africa's critics".

Peter Mokaba must find this equally extraordinary. The Pretoria Supreme Court has just refused to order the security police to stop torturing him. Mokaba (28) is the President of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO). He has been detained under section 29 of the Internal Security Act since 12 March this year. The Act stipulates that he is not allowed to see a lawyer, and will remain in detention until he has answered all questions to the satisfaction of the police.

During his detention Mokaba has been moved around from one police station to another. It seems that he accidentally saw his mother near the entrance of Pietrsberg police headquarters on 11 April. He told his mother that he had been manacled hand and foot and refused sleep for days on end. He said that he had been threatened with death, punched, kicked, slapped, and hit with batons and sticks about the head and body.

The next day Mrs Mokaba was herself detained so that she could not testify on her son's behalf.

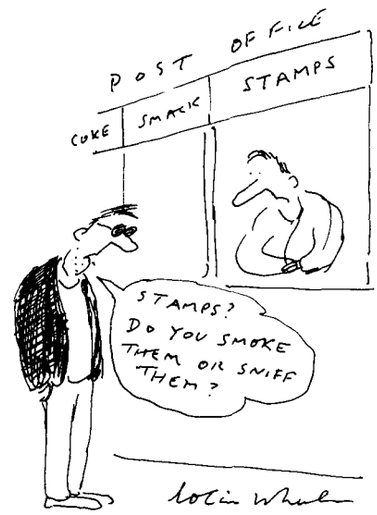
Finally, Mokaba's sister, Mapula Mokaba (22), applied to the Supreme Court for an order to restrain the police from assaulting her brother. The police did not bother to contest all of the allegations against them. They even added that Mokaba had been hit on the head with the butt of a revolver and jabbed in the side with rifles. Rather, the police argued that Mokaba could not have had time to discuss his treatment during his brief encounter with his mother, and that information about his treatment must have been smuggled out in a note.

This was enough for Mr Justice Mynhardt who rejected the applicant's evidence on hearsay, and accepted the police version of events. He promptly dismissed the application with costs.

Youths were central to the township uprisings which reached a peak two years ago. But with the government now back firmly in control, lawyers suspect that police are gathering evidence for a major treason trial to deal with their leaders.

Over half the SAYCO national executives are now in detention. Peter Mokaba was the driving force behind SAYCO, and was much in demand amongst township youths for his inspiring speeches. With nothing to fear from the courts, the police can torture him as they please. ●

Calling a truce on the drugs war



ALFREDO GUTIERREZ was not Attorney-General of Colombia for long. In January he filled the vacancy caused by the assassination of his predecessor by drugs gangsters. He departed not long after, in the wake of allegations that his brother had bought a farm from Pablo Escobar, a drug tycoon rated by *Forbes* magazine as one of the world's top 20 richest men. The circumstances of his taking and leaving office provide an apt background for the remarks which, despite the brevity of his tenure, may yet find him a place in the history books.

Gutierrez is the first officer of state in recent times to have publicly admitted what in years to come may seem too obvious to be worth stating: that strategies of prohibition are ineffective in dealing with the illegal drugs industry. He announced that the government would be willing to hold peace talks with the drugs traffickers, and might legalise the trade. The Colombian President's aides distanced the administration from the Attorney-General's comments. Reaction in the US, which has dominated global drug policy for the best part of a century, was predictable. Ann Wrobleski, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotic Matters, called the comments "an outrage".

Less prominent compatriot voices, however, echoed Gutierrez. They included those of two Colombian bishops and the mayor of Medellin. Others are bound to follow, as the violence and corruption associated with the existence outside the law of a highly lucrative industry continues to disrupt the life of nations. And indications that elements of the world establishment are beginning to reconsider drug control policies have appeared in unexpected places. In this country, such ideas have recently received editorial support in organs as unimpeachably respectable as *The Economist* and *The Independent*. While the latter's leader was content to indicate general sympathy with a rethink, that of *The Economist* proposed a comprehensive policy.

It reckoned that drugs put into the hands of a small group of criminals over $100bn each year, "more than the GNPs of 150 of the 170 nations of the world", without any revenue accruing to governments who might use the money for purposes more benign than the corruption of politicians and law enforcers. It pointed out the extensive social acceptability of marijuana, and suggested that it be controlled in the same way as alcohol and tobacco. Consumption would be discouraged by taxation; another deterrent, the journal mused, mindful of one of its favourite hobbyhorses, might be to "give monopolies to state shops like the post office, which has perfected the art of driving customers away".

For heroin, *The Economist* proposed a hybrid of commercial and medical management; suggesting that addicts be permitted to register for the right to buy limited amounts of the drug. Tax, and therefore price, levels would be the main deterrent to both excessive consumption and the black market. Undecided about cocaine, the magazine reserved judgment about whether it should be controlled by the regime it prescribed for heroin, or that for the "soft" drug.

Behind the idea of "normalisation", as radical reform has come to be known, lies the same realisation that prompted Alfredo Gutierrez's remarks; that mass illegal drug use is a fact of life, its illegality corrupts societies and damages users, and prohibition does not work. It is also in part an attempt to overthrow the dead weight of rhetoric that has prevented any genuine debate during the drug panic of recent years. The cliché of the "war" against drugs has been enormously useful as a tool of political rhetoric — drugs are a godsend to a politician seeking a bandwagon or an issue with which to unite disparate constituencies, as Jesse Jackson appreciates — but pretty useless as an instrument of social policy.

It is also afflicted by inbuilt obsolescence. A government can gain funding for its policing agencies or support for erosion of civil liberties in the name of the war on drugs, but sooner or later, it must be able to claim victory. In the face of the persistent illegal drug use, other sections of the establishment are now questioning the effectiveness of prohibition. A striking example came in the *Sunday Telegraph* where it was suggested that Mrs Thatcher should consider "thinking the unthinkable" on drugs if she is ever to reverse its use in crime.

While radical options may become discussable in polite society, the prospects for a political head of steam behind "normalisation" look slim. The Left has little to offer on the subject beyond a vaguely libertarian attitude towards cannabis. If a Democrat beats George Bush, the Rev. Jackson will be able to continue the moralistic and populist approach initiated by Nancy Reagan. The lines of stress will divide North and South, as Third World countries seek to curtail the damage inflicted upon their own societies by the contradiction between public policies and social realities of industrialised nations.

Marek Kohn

War that's morally bankrupt

FOUR WEEKS ago the *New Statesman* revealed that "Pepe", a drugs informer from Colombia was being short-changed by West Yorkshire's Regional Crime Squad. Pepe's information and the risks he took impersonating drugs dealers led to arrests of major South American cocaine smugglers in Spain and Amsterdam and successful surveillance work in England.

Pepe had been led to believe that the police would give him a reward, setting him up with a new identity and livelihood. Instead they stopped paying for his accommodation and intimated he would soon be thrown out of the country.

So the *New Statesman* carried Pepe's story. And Huddersfield MP Barry Sheerman began phoning around Whitehall for explanations. Last week he

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got one, from Douglas Hurd, Home Secretary.

Hurd said Pepe had already had a reward, some £8,000 — the cost to the police of paying for Pepe's accommodation and subsistence expenses for the past year during which he has been helping with investigations. Seldom has an obligation been so neatly met by book-keeping.

Douglas Hurd said that Pepe has no specific promise from the police in writing; which is of course true. That's why Pepe kept complaining, only to be assured each time that everything would be sorted out in the future. The blunt truth is that there seems little intention of rewarding and protecting Pepe once the police are finished with him.

"I still hope the Home Office and police will act honourably towards Pepe," says Barry Sheerman. "If they don't, then the fight for Pepe's rights and proper treatment of drugs informers has to be made into a public issue." The drugs war is one the government is supposed not to want to lose. That may be. From Pepe's perspective it looks morally bankrupt.

Ed Harriman

Architect of "Bonk"

THE VERY last scene from last autumn's *This Week* exposé of the bizarre deal between Lord Stevens's United Newspapers and porn-king David Sullivan showed the latter's henchhack, Mike Gabbert, strip off at a BUPA check-up. The editor of the *Daily Star* unbuttoned his shirt and exposed a deathly pale chest. The programme was to be the death of the *Daily Bonk*, as Gabbert's paper was nicknamed, but no one suspected that Gabbert himself was on the way out too. He died last week of cancer, aged 53.

Despite his death being dishonourably ignored by Lord Stevens's *Daily Express* and *Daily Star* and down-played by the bulk of Fleet Street, with the gentlemanly exception of the *Daily Telegraph* which gave him a full obituary, Gabbert was an important figure in modern porno-journalism. A Hampshire lad, he moved from the *Portsmouth Evening News* onto low-life Fleet Street, picking up a newspaper reporter of the year gong for exposing a football bribes scandal in the mid-sixties. Fleet Street lore has it that Gabbert himself was not averse to the odd kick-back.

Gabbert dropped out of Fleet Street for ten years to launch an ill-starred golf and country club venture, the sort so loved by Thatcherite entrepreneurs. This wobbled, leaving our hero on his uppers living in a caravan for a while. With India-rubber consistency, Gabbert bounced from a tinker's life to the editorship of the Plymouth-based *Sunday Independent*.

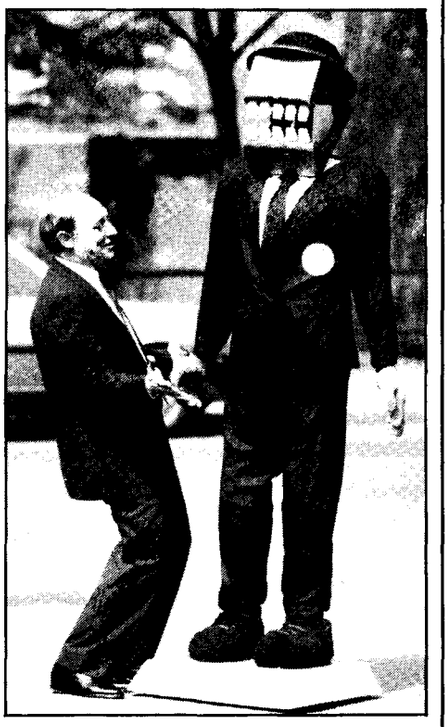
Sullivan picked out Gabbert and the two of them launched the stunningly successful *Sunday Sport*. Unlike his peers at the *News On Sunday*, Gabbert had a clear idea of his audience — lads who wanted a quick "I-had-sex-with-an-Alien" before they went off to the pub on a Sunday morning. Rising amidst an ocean of female breasts were sleaze-ads for Sullivan's rumpsteak magazines and the odd, very odd human freak story. Disgusting, deceitful and depraved maybe, but *Sunday Sport's* circulation rocketed to 500,000 under Gabbert, which it still appears to hold.

Although falling sales and a stay-away by advertisers wrecked Gabbert's attempt to work the same magic on the *Daily Star* last autumn, he did the media world a service. Gabbert's *Daily Star* took the logic of Kelvin Mackenzie's *The Sun* to its end, and lost money. There is a point, a journalistic absolute zero, beyond which some newspaper proprietors will say no and Mike Gabbert's cocktail of bonk, bonk and more bonk found it.

John Sweeney

If the caption fits

No 69



What a wonderful chap the editor is! The caption contest has been reprieved, and now you can tell us why you think Neil Kinnock is subjecting an innocent statue on the Alderton Estate in west London to a completely unprovoked monologue. Speech bubbles or caption on a postcard, please, by Monday 6 June. £10 book token to the winner as usual.

No 67: Winner

Major Ferguson: "A little stiff, Sir, but nothing a bit of exercise won't put right." (*Graham Duffield, Westerham, Kent.*)

Black sections at the crossroads

WHILE BLACK Sections are regarded to be at a low ebb following their fourth successive defeat at Labour Party Conference, the campaign for their recognition is paradoxically closer to reconciliation with the Party leadership than before.

The immediate effect of the vote at Brighton was to invite a reassessment of Black Sections strategy. It was in this climate that the idea of affiliation became fashionable because the arguments for constitutional change were increasingly seen to be obscuring the real agenda. Recognising the chance of a face-saving (and media-silencing) compromise, the reaction of the Labour leadership was to resist rejecting the proposals out of hand. There is also growing sympathy among members of the National Executive Committee for the notion of formal black representation in the Party structure.

However, there remains widespread concern about the extent to which certain elements within Black Sections are willing or able to compromise. Paul Boateng, MP, although still firmly supporting Black Sections, says: "A Labour Party that can find room in its constitution for Women's Sections, for a section called Poale Zion and Zionists, ought to be capable of devising a constitution that can embrace the aspirations and needs of black people." However, he cautions: "Black Sections shouldn't be a trojan horse for sectarian groupings within the Party who seek to use black people for their own end."

Black Sections have proved themselves to be as conciliatory as the Labour leadership of late. In place of the furious argument on strategy which had been anticipated at their annual conference in Manchester came the agreement that MP Bernie Grant officially represent Black Sections in mediatory talks with the leadership. Already there are results. Preliminary talks between Larry Whitty and Bernie Grant (observed by Kinnock's adviser John Newbigin) are under way and should lead to formal discussions with the NEC.

Manchester's conference saw resolutions debated on issues ranging from housing and the poll tax to Azania and Palestine, including the endorsement of a 3,500-word education paper. A comprehensive pamphlet of Black Sections policy papers is in production, to be distributed as part of a country-wide speaking tour over the next 12 months. If Black Sections are ever to achieve recognition it will be through practical initiatives of this kind and the popular support they generate.

The months between now and the next party conference in Blackpool are crucial. There is a real danger that a repeat of last year's debate could leave Black Sections isolated. Either way, the new Black Sections chair, Narendra Makanji, insists: "We are prepared for a long-term fight. Even if recognition was to fall into our laps tomorrow, it wouldn't be the kind of political change we want. The political work and the political battles carry on."

But he adds: "If we gained recognition as a result of the negotiations then it could make our work that much easier because we would then be working through the mainstream of British politics and we would be in a much more influential position."

David Upshal

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In praise of bloodymindedness

AS PART of revisionism, the *New Statesman* (8 April) ran a piece by David Thomas commending the new British managers to a Labour party once again presented as incompetent in wealth-creation and ignorantly dismissive of management criteria: efficiency, productivity, cost-effectiveness, matching performance goals, and all the rest.

In the remorselessly dietetic cliché, contemporary managers were pictured as the "leaner and fitter" jockeys ready to ride Low's and Orwell's old Labour horse into the knacker's van.

Well, no doubt the British economy must compete with thoroughbreds in world markets, and no doubt socialism will hardly replace capitalism for now, and so any victorious Labour party in 1992 must be able to manage more or less efficiently and productively, whatever constituency party catatonics say.

Not, however, at all costs. The costs, indeed, of becoming lean and fit, of booming profits and rising productivity have been paid entirely elsewhere: by those famously inefficient premises down at the DHSS, and by shifting the problem of manpower right out of the economic domain and into political space. The unemployed are inefficiently paid for by money wastefully printed from oil. They live in the gloaming of the dole and the strictly non-competitive mean streets of benefit payments. Thereby they help confirm the state as brutal, uncooperative and grudging.

Freed from these dowdy images and grimly pointless lives, capital goes on its headlong way, boldly, confidently and irresponsibly ridden by the new managers.

Management itself, however, has set up the terms of this version of society and of purposeful action within it. After all, it derives its theories from the classical antinomy between capital and labour, and its rhetoric from the deliberately de-politicised world of American industrial relations. Its whole momentum is intended to institutionalise ruthlessness, to subjugate workforces, to pervade and invade the consciousness of its staff so that industrial success and the fulfilment of ambition are coterminous. The old caricature of the hard-faced, muck-and-money, Rolls-Royce-driving boss is replaced by the youthful, blow-dried, blue-suited executive who abolishes the management dining-room and sacks his peers as well as the poor, plays squash before breakfast and works an 18-hour day.

But his aims, goals, and objectives are identical to those of the Crowthers of Bankdam (in Harold Wilson's favourite book). And it was our point then, as it is our point now, to oppose the deadly ruthlessness and monomania of capital with the more generous and humane vision of socialism.

The lethal irrelevance of management thinking to many of our humanly creative institutions comes out with greatest force in the welfare and cultural industries. It would be fatuous were it not painful to watch secondary school head teachers and university professors setting indicators, measuring productivity, and all the rest of the fearful rubbish in obedience to Mr Baker's shopkeeping manuals.

But schools, like DHSS offices, and even power stations, have non-measurable, aprofitable ends as well as being *places where people live*. Health and learning are not products, but *goods*, and intractable to management techniques. Even industry itself, before whose great progress all must now do worship, has no point of its own, but only human ends to serve.

These old socialist pieties still stand. In everyday life, they are even popular. Managerialism is the oppressive system of the year 1990 as totalitarianism was of the year 1930. Like Fascism and Stalinism then, it seeks domination.

Instead, socialists need administrative principles and theories capable of responding to people. One place at a time, one move at a time we should act wholly and consistently on behalf of a common future. If that future gives our children a decent livelihood and sufficient safety, then through all the pains and losses of dislocation and change, there could still be active approval and support for a vision of society in which a sense of collective destiny would be larger than the drives of private career. Such a future would be made, not managed.

Fred Inglis

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Lording it over dustmen

"THE LORDS," said Nicholas Ridley, talking about the government's Poll Tax victory this week, "have shown a certain support which wasn't just because they felt they shouldn't trespass on this territory but they seemed to actually approve."

As well they might. The 277 peers which the government managed to round up had no small personal interest in seeing off Lord Chelwood's amendment. The landed gentry stand to benefit more than anybody else from the abolition of domestic rates. Some, after all, are the Dukes (or their relations) whose advantages over dustmen figure in the anti-Poll tax rhetoric. The stately homes of England, how beautiful they stand, to show the upper classes still have the upper hand. No wonder 72 extra Lords who didn't turn up to vote for the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority put in an appearance for this one.

But the significant aspect of the government victory is not the fact that it was achieved by Bertie Denham's Operation Backwoodsman but that only 15 Conservative peers voted against their party. It was thus much less significant than the Commons vote on Michael Mates' similar amendment which was voted for by 38 Tory MPs (who were, incidentally, putting far more on the line in terms of the career prospects).

What all this demonstrates, above all, is the fatuity of pretending that the House of Lords is a significant part of the legislative process. As Lord Chelwood acknowledged, they can't legitmately come up with spontaneous new ideas. Neither can they — however much one might have wished it in this particular case — cheerfully throw out a central piece of the government's programme. (The fact that the government was elected under a manifestly unjust system doesn't increase the legitmacy of the Lords.) Which leaves them with the very minor function of acting as a revising chamber for the last-minute second thoughts by the government.

Perhaps the one useful outcome of the poll tax debacle will be to put an end to the recent flirtation of sections of the liberal left with the Lords. The notion that they somehow represent the conscience of the nation, a last bastion of common decency, is a delusion. Once that's done we can start to think about what kind of second chamber we really need.

Jolyon Jenkins

Hospital group celebrates

THE OAK tree that has grown from the campaign to save West Middlesex hospital, Hospital Alert (see *NS* 5 February), is spreading out from its early successes — the 1,000 consultants' petition to Number 10 last Christmas, a mass lobby of Parliament in February, and a 10,000-signature affirmation delivered to Mrs Thatcher from people willing to forego tax cuts to help the NHS.

Now the group is planning to join in the "celebrations" marking the NHS's 40th birthday in July. With a game plan reminiscent of the Silver Jubilee in 1977, it is organising street parties, birthday cake competitions and carnival processions. With the government's health service review due soon, let's hope it doesn't turn into a wake. ●

POLITICAL SKETCH

"Banish fat Geoffrey . . ."

Edward Pearce

THERE IS such a thing as benign pre-emption; and benign pre-emption is what I suspect some of my colleagues at the cerebration-face are up to. First Hugo Young of the *Guardian*, then Alan Watkins at the *Observer* argue that Geoffrey Howe must be for the chop. Mrs Thatcher has been defied and cheeked, they say. Notoriously this is a customary prelude to death. Anyway, Mrs Thatcher wants a prettier face and a more submissive spirit in one of the great offices. Lawson is too important; Hurd, also an offender against perfect submission, has made his peace with the Queen of the Night by giving a job on the moral front to that cove who has trouble with his dental cement. Douglas can live for the time being. For Geoffrey are prepared the full works of hood, harness, noose, beam, drop and Bernard Ingham.

I don't think so for reasons shortly to be set out. But you can see what the chaps are going on about. Nothing better assures a man continued occupancy of office, to the filing sound of the clenched teeth of his superior, than an adventitious proclamation of his coming removal from it. So one sees the objective: say often enough in a prominent place that Howe must go and you start up a cry of "Banish plump Geoff and banish all the World", Ma gets the message and declines to fulfil your prophecy.

The truth is that Mrs Thatcher is almost certainly overreaching herself very badly. Any Prime Minister under our unbalanced, spur-jangling, Hamiltonian system of executive pre-eminence can do a great deal. But he (as I see Mrs Thatcher) can't do everything.

The Tories, like Labour, are a coalition and factions other than Mrs Thatcher's own have their own unaccommodated ambitions. It is a peculiar folly of Mrs Thatcher to want to fill all the places that matter with the unremarkable and/or unpopular men who suit her political tasks.

Nicholas Ridley, one runner for the Exchequer, is an eccentric, querulous, bad-mannered aristo with all the resentments of a young son. He has a zero constituency among the rank and file. Ambitious lads, conscious that the whips are watching, will rally to him when a bill is under fire (rescuing Ridley has become a cottage industry in both Houses with Bertie Denham performing like a Stakhanovite) *but nobody likes him.*

Cecil Parkinson, another of those fifties British film star-types in the mould of Anthony Steel who so captivate the Prime Minister, is not disliked. Despite abilities and application, he is simply not taken seriously, not even perhaps by himself! The lady, who wishes to push her authority to the point of extreme prejudice against the trench-uncle of the Tory party (the derived and loved old shoe, good for working anything including dirty work), in order to find a slot for either the gargoyle or the smoothy, is getting it wrong.

MRS THATCHER is politically successful but she is not invincible. At 62 she poses the question "When?". Yet by insulting Howe in the Walden interview, Mrs Thatcher not only displayed crass arrogance, she informed a loyal but ambitious minister that his motives for loyalty would hereafter be entirely defensive; loyalty might keep a job, it would not advance him. Howe has been edging into discreet dissent for at least a year. Before the Irish difference and the South African difference there was the letter to his constituents. He has a gifted wife who cordially despises the Prime Minister and he has demonstrated by his alliance with Nigel Lawson that it is possible to baulk and humiliate Margaret Thatcher.

Now, of course, the first rumours against Howe, like the rumours against the Speaker, do come from government sources, though not yet Bernard Ingham, But I would be surprised to see them succeed. Mrs Thatcher's popularity is of the radical sort, gleaming at its brightest clean outside the country, notably in the United States. It is stronger among Tory activists than among Tory MPs, and not at all strong among members of the government. Her capacity for quarrelling with cabinet colleagues, a list now fit to stand with Banquo's children, is ultimately destructive of the Tory fabric.

"Is he a patriot for me" is ultimately the creed of a brittle regime stuck full of neuroses and nervous apprehensions. Mrs Thatcher fears Michael Heseltine and with good reason. He has been through her and done his own act of pre-emption. Because he walked rather than waited to be pushed, and yet retained a big piece of the same dim, uninformed loyalty in the country and party upon which she with the strengths of office relies, he is equipped for a certain day.

Because Heseltine exists and lives a political career with lively hopes, the attitudes of other Ministers are subtly altered. To be plain, there are enough mice, if not yet enough courage, to bell the cat. And no one should fail to understand the effect years of abuse, from-the-hip moralising, shouting sessions, disloyalty to colleagues and all the things to which insecurity and self-doubt drive her, have upon adult mature politicians blessed with a little of the geniality, cynicism and magnanimity to which Mrs Thatcher is a stranger.

Because the wish is father to the thought, one must remain sceptical and prophesy no dooms, but the thought remains. When the Prime Minister looked two months back as if she might mix it with Nigel Lawson, it seemed to me that she, not he, would be hurt. A finance minister is always hard to crush, a successful one more so, and one who has an independent spirit impossible. She did quarrel and it turned, not at her bidding, into a row with *two* finance ministers. She lost.

Let us not assume that Mrs Thatcher's apprehensions about disloyal ministers are altogether fanciful or that they are incapable of developing into the big quarrel which transfers her discreetly from Zenith to downslope. Conservative loyalty is a wonderful thing, a bottle always full until the instant it is empty. □

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BEN PIMLOTT

Battle for the moral ground: Jesus the bond dealer vs Christ the revolutionary

WHICH PARTY in British politics commands the greatest moral authority among electors? The obvious answer is Labour, which is known to contain a large number of worried, conscience-stricken do-gooders. For those who put a premium on obedience, however, the Tories are a better bet. Either way, the moral ground seems to be as hotly disputed between rival leaders in the late 1980s as in the age of Gladstone and Disraeli.

First we had Labour's waffly "Statement of Democratic Socialist Aims and Values", which sought to define the principles behind the Kinnock-Hattersley *perestroika*. Now the Prime Minister has countered with her own, ingenious, reinterpretation of the holy scriptures, designed to show that, if Jesus were alive today, he would be a bond dealer or, at the very least, an estate agent.

Since by any commonsense reading of the New Testament the Son of God was evidently an extreme communitarian socialist, some hard textual research was needed in order to get there. Who was the biblical scholar at Central Office who came up with the line from Thessalonians ("If any would not work, neither should he eat"), which neatly justifies the whole Thatcherite enterprise? He or she deserves an incentive payment (something else, according to the Prime Minister, which the Nazarene favoured).

Naturally, Mrs Thatcher steered clear of the famous passage in Luke, Chapter 18, which right-wing princes and potentates have been trying to wriggle out of for a couple of millennia. This is the story of the ruler who asks Jesus how he can get to heaven, and gets an answer he does not like. At first, Jesus strings him along. You know the ten commandments, he says: keep them. But I am doing that already, replies the ruler. At this point the Messiah snaps the trap shut:

> Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.
>
> And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

So much for Mrs Thatcher's escape route. It isn't being rich that matters, she said, but loving money "for its own sake". Unless the Evangelist got him wrong, however, Jesus wasn't concerned with states of mind. "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" suggests that, whatever contortions ministers may manage now, they will have a hard time at the pearly gates justifying the community charge or the Lawson tax reforms.

As Judith Herrin's brilliant, magisterial new study, *The Formation of Christendom* (Blackwell £29.50), shows, there is no getting away from the fact that early Christian belief was a radical, anti-establishment, poor people's faith, especially popular among slaves and outcasts because of its doctrines of equality and social concern. In spite of many attempts from Constantine to Thatcher to appropriate the idea of fellowship and love-thy-neighbour for ruling class purposes and to turn it into a form of emperor worship, the core of Christianity has always been revolutionary.

SO WHAT was the Prime Minister up to? At one level, her speech was a crude attempt to woo Scottish voters who have hitherto been mysteriously blind to the moral excellence of the New Right. Yet it was also a sympton of a well-founded government anxiety about public opinion.

> *"What is wanted from the policy review is aggressive radicalism, rejecting the old-fashioned sub-Marxism of the early '80s while showing a confident desire to unite the nation"*

There is the slight narrowing of the opinion poll gap. There is the Harris poll which shows that 61 per cent of electors think Britain has become more selfish in the past decade (against only 19 per cent who think it has become more generous) and 48 per cent consider it less happy (21 per cent happier), despite a general perception that the country is, nevertheless, richer than it was. There is also the significant peeling off of support among morally concerned sections of the establishment. (Anglicans will note with interest that among House of Lords opponents of the community charge were the Primate and several of his leading bishops.)

The time is ripe, in short, for a moral crusade — and our shrewd Prime Minister knows it. The reality is not one of Tory moral hegemony, but of a vacuum waiting to be filled. Now that the heady SDP venture is definitely over, the lack of inspirational leadership is more than ever apparent.

Can the Labour Party provide it? For Labour to strike a moral chord within the electorate at large, it will need to get its teeth into stronger meat than the worthy, unobjectionable but rather wimpish products of the policy review.

There is much to be said in favour of the preliminary thoughts to come from this undertaking. There has been a refreshing willingness to discard old baggage and a desire (particularly notable in the statement produced by the Bryan Gould and John Evans group on "A Productive and Competitive Economy") to pull Labour thinking out of its comfortably stagnant swamp and push it into the mainstream. What there have not been are any quantum leaps. The policy review documents are brave and, occasionally, defiant. But they will not ignite the nation.

It is easier to urge others to have new ideas than to provide them. Perhaps, therefore, we need to talk about new approaches. Take unemployment, for instance. At the last election the promise to expand the economy and make jobs was the Labour Party's main difference from the Conservatives. The question must now be asked: should this issue continue to have the same prominence in 1991? The answer is that there is a need to develop a sharply different tactic.

THE PROPER reaction to the government's announcement last week that unemployment has fallen to below 2.5 million and is now at its lowest since October 1981 is that it hasn't and it isn't. Nevertheless, it would be unwise for Labour to go on beating the same old rhetorical drum. Although part of the drop in unemployed is sleight of hand, two thirds of it is genuine, and the trend is now more sharply downwards than anybody previously imagined. Official figures below 2 million are quite possible by the early 1990s, by which time the Tories will be able to claim the fall as a great success, confident that few voters will remember their degree of responsibility for high unemployment in the first place. Moreover, in the South East (where Labour has to win most seats), the biggest problem may be skill shortages, while youth unemployment — traditionally the centrepiece of Labour speeches — may only exist in pockets, because of the dramatic demographic decline in the numbers of 16-19 year olds.

Labour, in other words, will be right to offer better policies to deal with unemployment (especially long-term, adult unemployment), but it should no longer give it top billing. Instead, it should consider unemployment in the wider context of Thatcherite divisiveness and negative redistribution.

Unemployment is a piece of late Victorian jargon, invented at a time when the novel science of statistics was getting off the ground. *Poverty* is an older and more useful concept, encompassing a range of deprivations of which lack of work is only one — alongside inadequate benefits, lack of security or rights in employment, low pay, bad or unhealthy working conditions. The shadow of inequality and divisiveness that has separated the prosperous from the peripheral, the well-rewarded from the powerless, has lengthened, creating a more selfish and frightened society.

Labour can choose to go along with the new climate in order not to disturb contented voters: or to fight it. The intention is not yet clear. It must be made so. What is wanted from the policy review is not a whisper of me-tooism but aggressive radicalism, rejecting the old-fashioned sub-Marxism of the early eighties while showing a confident desire to unite the nation. It must be a radicalism that understands the pace of change and keeps ahead of it, refusing to make any compromises with the Tory, stratified society. It must be a flexible radicalism that permits no suspicion that Labour will base its appeal on being "moderate".

When these points are clear, the party will be able to campaign on its new policy with enthusiasm; and the "moral" question may be resolved. □

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The end of the affair

The Thatcher-Lawson stand-off wasn't just about exchange rates. Lawson has come to accept that the market doesn't rule OK; Mrs Thatcher hasn't. The future of this British economic revival rests on the unravelling of their profound — and continuing — quarrel. **WILL HUTTON** ***reports***

SUDDENLY the hegemony of the right looks less certain. Dukakis and Mitterrand, like the SPD in Germany, are profiting from a hesitancy in the march of the right's "Big Idea". A new mood is emerging. Markets and the axioms of 19th-century economic liberalism have begun to lose their appeal worldwide.

Right-wing parties are, moreover, at odds with themselves — should their pitch to the electorate be the promise of lower taxes and less "state" or a return to genial paternalism? Whether it's drugs in the US or education in France, a party too closely associated with the proposition that government is bad and should be limited starts with an immediate disadvantage; suddenly the demands of the moment require a different response. Whereas trade unions, inflation or an over-large public sector could reasonably have been said to require *laissez-faire* solutions in the late 1980s, the same remedies for an undertrained workforce or over-volatile financial markets now seem less efficacious.

Mrs Thatcher's Conservatives are not immune from the trends — as the recent local difficulty between first and second Lords of the Treasury revealed. How and whether to manage the exchange rate is as vexing for economic liberals as the regulation of the building boom in the south east, say, or the prevention of the Swiss bid for Rowntree. The issues insist upon a role for a pro-active state and limits set to the capacities of markets; and the Prime Minister for one does not like it.

Here the debate over the exchange rate is particularly relevant, for the Bretton Woods system of managed exchange rates was the first institution to fall to the wave of New Right thinking in the early 1970s. First in; first out — for 15 years later we are witnessing the rebirth of the spirit, if not the letter, of Bretton Woods. This, of course, was not how it was meant to be: back in the mid-1970s the setting of exchange rates — like the management of schools and public housing today — was to be placed firmly in the hands of private decision-makers who in exerting their choices would drive the system to a beneficient equilibrium that governments could not attempt.

However, a decade of low growth and wildly oscillating currencies has disabused everybody, save the denizens of some Midwestern universities and a Georgian house in Westminster, of the merits in the argument. It has not worked. The idea was that if the market prices of exchange rates departed from some notion of real value then, Adam Smith-like, in would jump speculators with a countervailing view and drive the currency back to the "natural" rate. This was, after all, a fundamental economic law. Yet the market's invisible hand has failed to move. Instead of correcting deviations from some natural exchange rate, the market has amplified them; the two most obvious examples being the rise in the pound between 1979 and 1981 and then the rise in the dollar between 1981 and 1985. True, policy mistakes in both countries, in particular over-high interest rates, might account for as much as half of the rise, but the rest lay in the infelicitous operation of the market.

Tricks and trends

Currency operators work in the extreme short term. They don't bet on what an exchange rate will be in three months: they bet on what an exchange rate will be in half an hour. The trick is to establish a trend, to ensure that there is no reason for it stopping in the immediate future, and to buy and sell to take advantage of it — thus exacerbating the very trend from which they hope to make money. Profound misalignments are the inevitable consequence, and with them lost jobs and lost factories — and, as importantly in the countries which have temporarily very competitive currencies, new jobs and new factories. A fall in the exchange rate does not return us to the status quo ante; by now production has moved country. To get it back there has to be just as prolonged a period of exchange-rate misalignment in the other direction. It's madness — and at the Plaza Hotel in New York in the autumn of 1985 the finance ministers of the United States, Britain, France, West Germany and

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The Chancellor may have won this battle, but the outcome of the war will be determined by his mistress. Already former cabinet ministers detect the beginning of the end for Lawson; even if he stays he does so in a less advantageous economic and political position than he would have chosen

Japan recognised it as such.

The Plaza agreement was a watershed; it defined a moment when, as Nigel Lawson has said, governments once again accepted the responsibility for giving the markets a lead. The lead given was that they wanted the dollar to fall; but the mechanism, at least as publicly described, was pretty weak. The communiqué talked only of government intervention, "if helpful". But the dollar did fall, and meeting again at the French finance ministry at the Louvre in February 1987 the industrialised countries, joined now by the Italians and the Canadians (the Group of Seven or G7), hardened up their position. What was now required was a period of stability: they would intervene to get it; and they would try to organise a policy mix that would unravel the unsettlingly big imbalances in trade patterns between them — imbalances that currency misalignments had magnified.

In practice, this meant that the Japanese should reflate, which they did. At the Venice Economic Summit last summer; in the joint communiqué released before Christmas, which talked of exchange-rate instability actively endangering world economic prospects; in the concerted intervention in the first week of January; and at the IMF meeting this April, which added a commodity index to the list of indicators to be watched, the industrialised world has progressively edged towards a managed system of exchange rates.

Bretton Woods it is not, but it is a far cry from floating. It now seems that there are agreed, if unpublished, "reference ranges" for the movement of currencies against the dollar. At the limits of those ranges, countries have accepted an obligation to act — to intervene or change policy, so that the ranges can hold. There are five-year projections for world output, prices and trade — and if they do not look sustainable, then there is a presumption that policy should change. Debate rages as to whether the commodities index developed as a lead indicator for inflation should include oil and gold — but willy-nilly it exists, and again if it signals problems, there is a presumption of action. Of course, the system is flexible; and the scale of any presumed action is left hazy, but given a continuing political commitment, an embryonic constitution for the management of exchange rates is in place.

Nigel bucks the Margaret

Which brings us to the fateful evening meeting between Mrs Thatcher and Lawson a week last Monday. Reports that Lawson talked of resignation are probably fanciful; his relationship with Mrs Thatcher does not work like that. On the other hand, if the Prime Minister had continued with her line that markets cannot be bucked, his position was untenable; it would have implied Britain's de facto withdrawal from the system of worldwide exchange-rate management, and that the Chancellor could no longer honour arrangements in which he had been a prime mover. That the system has enough flexibility for him to fudge any policy change was not a refuge. He could simply amend the reference ranges for sterling with a few telephone calls, thus heeding Mrs Thatcher's view that intervention should be minimal. But to do so would remove the whole point of the accords. They are there to resist currency misalignments, not accommodate them — and the Chancellor has made no secret of his agreement with their purpose. Indeed, privately, he has argued that the arrangements should be made even more transparent and disciplined.

How forcefully he has argued this case is a matter of conjecture, for in these matters observers are rather like Brother William in *The Name of the Rose*: trying to guess the plan of the library from the shape of the walls outside. In his speech to the International Monetary Fund last year, Lawson spoke warmly of managing exchange rates, although he was careful to do so as a hard-money finance minister, street-wise enough to know that a return to Bretton Woods was calling for the moon. Yet throughout last year the pound was not allowed to rise above 3 Deutschmarks; not 3.0150 or 2.990, but a clear and round three.

Lawson wanted the world to know what he was up to; transparency, at least before Mrs Thatcher's famous intervention, was the order of the day. This already is a measure of his philosophic distance from the Prime Minister. He is prepared to make a judgment about the right exchange rate and stand by it — spending more than 20 billion dollars as additions to the reserves in the process. His position was underlined not only by a commitment to exchange-rate stability, but by a conviction that at current levels, especially against the DM, the pound is unsustainably high. This, despite any recent reticence, remains his view — and the reasons are not hard to find.

Britain is in the middle of an astonishing credit boom; and at the same time foreigners are so impressed by Britain's public finances — a budgetary surplus — and reports of an economic renaissance that they are more prepared to buy pounds than dollars, yen or Deutschmarks. Even at 3DM to the pound, sterling made British labour costs 10-15 per cent more uncompetitive (more so at today's 3.17), so that the twin impact of a relatively high currency and consumer demand growing at least 2 per cent a year faster in Britain than abroad sucks in imports and depresses exports. In the first three months of this year alone, the current account deficit was £2 billion — providing Britain's economic managers with a very delicate judgment. Lowering interest rates to lower the pound will raise demand; increasing them will lift the pound. Either way, the balance of payments stands to worsen, and there will be some level — say, an annualised rate of over £10 billion deficit — at which foreign holders of sterling will become disabused of their love affair with Mrs Thatcher and jump ship. Interest rates will then have to leap to support sterling, because a high pound is all that stands between the credit boom and a pick-up in inflation, and Prime Minister feelings about higher inflation are well-known.

Of course, the foreigners may be right. Britain's new-found economic dynamism may be so complete that it will be able to live with credit growing at 30 per cent a year and a pound that could be up to 15 per cent overvalued, the goods pouring from our new factories and workshops. Mrs Thatcher is certainly tempted to think so and few of her acolytes dare to disabuse her. If economic success is going to be so quickly dashed from our hands, then the Thatcher miracle can hardly have been very enduring. That is not something she wants to hear — nor does she believe it.

Lawson, on the other hand, is keenly aware of the risks. The Treasury has under-predicted the growth in consumption for three consecutive years. The reassuring forecast of a £4 billion current account deficit for this year announced at budget time relied on a slowdown in consumption and a level of the pound somewhat lower than

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THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

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today's. What if consumption does not slow down? What if foreigners carry on buying the pound? What then?

Bill Martin, chief UK economist at Phillips and Drew, supplies some answers. The current account deficit for this year slides to over £8 billion and next year to over £16 billion — or some 4 per cent of GDP. The Chancellor is a man given to optimism, but his doubts about the pound are plainly grounded in this pattern of payments deficits. If the exchange rate is being driven up by market forces, then they must be bucked — anything to reduce the risk of uncomfortable choices later in the year.

The banks of the Rubicon

On the face of it, Mrs Thatcher has chosen to vindicate her Chancellor's judgment. But considerable damage has already been done. The pound is higher, and interest rates lower, than he would have liked, so that the twin forces pushing the economy into deficit have been amplified. Sufficient scepticism exists in the foreign-exchange markets about the durability of their settlement to make any currency trader prepared to chance his arm, at least for half an hour; will the government lower interest rates further and sell pounds in sufficient quantity to check his and his fellows' instincts? There must be doubts, and as long as the talk is of West Germany and France as the ailing, if not sick, men of Europe, the upward pressures on the pound as the preferred European currency will remain — and with it the perils ahead for the government.

One way out would be for the pound to be firmly located in an exchange rate system that could take on the dealers and beat them; despite the markets' reputation for irresistible power, easily the most potent counter-influence is the central banks and the bottomless reserves of foreign currency they command — in extremis, they can always print it. Membership of the European Monetary System is one route; and if not that, then a strict adhesion to the reference ranges established by the Group of Seven. If they were published, better still: the markets would have a clear picture of the authorities' intentions.

But this is a major Rubicon for the British government to cross. International accords or EMS alike, the presumption is that governments can be more right than markets; and that finance flows can and must be controlled. And if the experience that warrants such initiative internationally is valid, it is more so domestically. If lower interest rates threaten too much import-oriented consumption growth, then the authorities need to intervene in this market as much as the foreign exchange market. When challenged along these lines in his evidence to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the Governor of the Bank of England, dismissed the notion as unenforceable — not "really a practical proposition in the modern context". Banks and building societies would get round any guidelines on credit, so the attempt was not worthwhile. But they are workable in Japan; they have worked after a fashion in Britain — if governments can take on currency operators, why not bank managers? Even if the policy dilemma was only fractionally eased, the attempt would surely be worthwhile — or are financial freedoms too precious to be sacrificed for some larger good?

None of these initiatives is likely to be taken, even by a Chancellor increasingly persuaded, if not of the domestic arguments, then at least of the international case. He may have won this battle, but the outcome of the war will be determined by his mistress. Already former cabinet ministers detect the tell-tale signs of love being withdrawn, of strained relations, of the beginning of the end for Lawson; and even if he stays, he does so in a less advantageous economic and political position than he would have chosen.

His successor, we can be certain, will be a man for whom intervention is anathema and who approaches exchange rate accords with the suspicion of the Prime Minister — but that will not ease the underlying dilemma. In any case, the intellectual argument is running the other way. In 1979, the argument was why vote for a half-convinced monetarist administration when you can have the real thing; sometime in the 1990s the boot will be on the other foot. Why vote for half-persuaded interventionists when the real thing is on offer. But will it be on offer — and when? □

Will Hutton is editor designate of the European Business Channel and will be writing regularly on economics for the "New Statesman and Society".

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TV CHARITY

'Give us a break, not a begging bowl'

This weekend the nation will be urged to open its hearts and purses by the first national ITV "Telethon", in aid of disability charities.* ANNE KARPF *takes issue with the portrayal by TV fundraising fests of people with disabilities as courageous heroes in need of able-bodied people's charity

TELETHONS ARE the annual opportunity for celebrities and audiences to have fun while doing good. Simultaneously glitzy and worthy, they're usually 12 or 24-hour affairs, with celebrities dropping into the studio to chat or perform, and filmed inserts of charities needing money or showing what past recipients did with theirs. Viewers and listeners phone in to pledge donations and the presenters, regularly announcing the total to date, exhort the audience to the finishing-line — the target sum.

Telethons demand enormous organisation — one used 650 telephones staffed by British Telecom telephonists. The BBC telethon "Children in Need" ropes in every BBC local and national radio station, as well as the BBC TV networks. And the 1985 Thames Telethon completely displaced the station's regular schedules for 24 hours.

Heart-tugging revelry

Telethons originated in the United States, where the best known is comedian Jerry Lewis's Labour Day telethon, which has raised large sums for muscular dystrophy charities for 19 years. When the BBC borrowed the idea in 1980 it decided that the British public wouldn't stomach the full American revelry, with its unrestrainedly heart-tugging appeals in a 24-hour non-stop variety show. The BBC version is a more muted affair, aiming to reach the (smaller, local) charities the other appeals don't reach. Its recipients are children with mental or physical handicaps (who get some two-fifths of the grants), or those with behavioural disorders, in care, in hospital, or living in under-resourced or stressful places.

The sums raised by telethons are sizeable. Between them in 1985, the BBC and Thames TV telethons raised over £5 million, and in 1985/86 British commercial radio stations raised over £2.6 million in cash for charity through events like a Walkathon (a 25-mile charity walk).

But although the receiving organisations are understandably pleased to have the money, telethons have been roundly indicted by American disability activists for perpetuating damaging stereotypes of disability which outweigh the financial gains. While acknowledging both organisers' and donors' good intentions, they argue that they arouse "there, but for the grace of God" feelings in their audience which oppress people with disabilities.

> In order to get their money, they have to humiliate me . . . to me, a wheelchair is a solution, not a sentence. Because I use a wheelchair, I am able to do many things I otherwise could not. I am not "confined to a wheelchair". I don't "face a life without meaning", and I'm not a "poor, unfortunate cripple who needs your help".

Although British telethons are more subtle, their images usually more positive and optimistic, the British disability movement too deplores "fund-raising at a distance . . . the twentieth-century version of the beggar in the streets. Even the begging bowls are no longer in our own hands . . . [It] gives people a sense of doing something for us without bringing them into contact with us."

> *"Since telethons make the able-bodied feel bountiful (many would be affronted to hear that people with disabilities feel oppressed by their pity) telethons may really be for the able-bodied"*

Most British telethons focus almost exclusively on children, since cute youngsters undoubtedly head the hierarchy of tele-appeal, with less cute oldsters at the bottom. There's a total mismatch between the age of those people with disabilities who appear on telethons (and TV in general) and the age of most people with disabilities in the general population. Moreover, although the BBC's rules specifically forbid it giving grants to relieve a statutory body of its responsibilities, disadvantaged groups are especially disadvantaged at a time of welfare cuts, and telethons (since they rarely collect for luxuries) can't help but contribute to the idea that it's the job of private organisations and not the state to provide or collect essential funds. They also reinforce an image of people with disabilities as dependent on charity. Even where telethons increase the visibility of people with disabilities, their one-off occurrence inevitably smacks of tokenism.

Charitable vulgarity

For whose benefit are telethons organised? It's not always clear. Parts of the 1985 Thames Telethon were commercially sponsored, causing one TV critic to observe that

> no shove ha-penny contest went unsponsored. This made for wall-to-wall advertising and a steady line of executives crossing the stage like ants, each carrying a large cardboard cheque. "Give a big hand to the chairman of Burtons" . . . "Sponsored by those lovely folk from Panasonic."

Commercial companies gain a whiff of worthiness and all are beyond reproach when the vulgarity is for charity. Since telethons make the able-bodied feel bountiful (and many would be affronted to hear that people with disabilities feel oppressed by their pity), telethons may really be for the able-bodied. As the Controller of BBC 1 who authorised the first British telethon said, "It makes me feel warm."

Medico-charitable broadcasting has a long history. President Roosevelt, paralysed from polio in 1921, enlisted popular entertainers such as Eddie Cantor to raise funds for polio treatment and research via network radio on his birthday each year. But at the same time, Roosevelt resolved never to appear helpless, dependent, or defeated by polio, and so wouldn't allow himself to be photographed in a wheelchair. The press and media generally co-operated. Roosevelt, while he tried to improve conditions for people with polio, couldn't allow himself to identify with them for fear of damaging his robust political image, and many Americans never knew, or forgot, that their President couldn't walk unaided.

Could telethons be different? In 1979 United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), an American organisation known for its "look, we're walking" telethons, decided to change them. They wrote up the speeches the celebrities were supposed to make, asked people with disabilities to monitor the telethon, and set out guidelines stressing that telethons should show both adults and children and should reflect the degrees of disability typical among people with cerebral palsy. Celebrities were to be thoroughly informed about the condition and use appropriate terminology, avoiding terms like victim, poor, crippled, unfortunately, tragedy and other words arousing pity rather than respect. They were also to avoid asking viewers to give out of thankfulness that their own children were born healthy, and UCP outlawed images which placed undue emphasis on people with cerebral palsy walking and talking, leading to unrealistic public expectations and damaging the self-image of people with cerebral palsy who would never be able to do either. They also wanted to draw attention to the organisation's advocacy role in helping people with disabilities realise their own desires and needs, like gaining access to public education, barrier-free buildings and transport, housing, and jobs.

When people with disabilities monitored the telethon, they found it a significant but limited improvement. Though the main issues emerged, "the celebrities are tuned to seize on the theatrics of the moment. Given national television exposure, they are not going to be held to tight, pre-drafted scripts. So when they see a moment of possible drama, they seize it."

Other ways of representing disability have been suggested by some recent pioneering British documentaries (usually made by Central Television for Channel 4). They're presented by people with disabilities themselves, and neither appeal for able-bodied people's generosity, nor applaud disabled people's courage. Instead, they examine the material and social obstacles faced by people with disabilities trying to live independent lives.

They've reported on campaigns for access to transport, housing, and jobs, prejudice against sign language, institutionalised discrimination against people with disabilities and attempts to counter it. They address both people with and those without disabilities. Instead of enlisting the able-bodied through guilt or pity, pounds or pence, they invite our anger and support. □

"Doctoring the Media: the Reporting of Health and Medicine" by Anne Karpf is published by Routledge, £7.95.

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Looking beyond tea, tears and sympathy

Last week's New Statesman criticised the draft papers from Labour's policy review groups as "vacuous", "deeply depressing", "euphemistic" and "bland". JOHN REID MP responds, defending the basic principle of revisionism

I KNOW IT is unfashionable, but I prefer to wait until I have actually seen the official published version of Labour's policy reviews before commenting on the proposals. But one thing is already certain. The argument over the *principle* of the reviews is fast becoming more "sound and fury" than sound politics. For even the most backward in Labour's backwoods must now realise that, while the details remain to be settled, the argument over the political principle has already been decided. Labour *is* reviewing its politics, position and strategy — and not before time. The only real surprise is that a socialist party has spent so long agonising over whether or not to face reality.

For well over a decade we have preferred the cosseted warmth of the party caucus to the cold climate of contemporary reality outside; we have preferred slogans in place of analysis and preferred to hark back to the 1920s rather than look forward to the 1990s. Indeed, so indefensible had that fashion become that even those opposed to the review process were too embarrassed to do so in a straightforward fashion. This has already led to some extraordinary political contortions.

Tony Benn, in one of the earliest articles on the subject (in the *Guardian* 1 February), managed to attack the idea of a "review" while conceding the need to "look in detail", to "analyse", to "reject the old patterns", to "look more deeply into the issues", to "critically re-examine", and to "develop a clearer idea" of our politics. Indeed, no fewer than 13 times in the same article he managed to find a suitable substitute for the word "review" — a testimony to his extensive vocabulary, if not to his commitment to "say what is meant and mean what is said". Eric Heffer, having admitted at the outset that he agreed with "99 per cent" of the original Statement of Values produced by the National Executive, nevertheless felt compelled to parade his opposition to the remaining one per cent on our national networks. Presumably it is the same one per cent oppositionalism which has driven him to contest the party leadership.

So, as was predictable, the opponents of the policy reviews have now had to adopt another tack. We are to be allowed to review, so long as we don't actually change anything. The blind adherence to the status quo, which even they now realise is indefensible as a principle for all except traditional Tories, will be enshrined in leftish phrases and defended line by line in the name of socialist orthodoxy. Every party has its Ligachevs.

But it does take the old game of outlefting the left to new (and almost international) levels. Thus, while we congratulate the French and European socialists on their electoral advances; while it is now apparently acceptable for Gorbachev to countenance the utility of the market in certain spheres; while the Yugoslav state can build houses for sale as well as rent; and while the Chinese can tolerate relative discrepancies in income and affluence; any of this in Britain is to be decried as heresy.

In reality, it is the tactic of trying to impede piecemeal what proved to be impossible to stop in principle.

Tory door knocker

What are these realities? First of all there is the self-evident fact that for the best part of a decade Labour has been unelectable. Despite a period of soaring unemployment, increasing poverty, economic degeneration, and corrupt, authoritarian and at times dictatorial government, we have remained so.

But the need to review our policies and strategy in a self-critical fashion does not stem exclusively, or primarily, from electoral reasoning. Indeed, electoral failure is a *symptom* of Labour's underlying disease. The ailment itself has been one which is debilitating for any political movement, but suicidal for a socialist one. We have utterly failed to recognise that the world has changed around us; failed to analyse the changes and therefore remained incapable of responding to them. We have failed to recognise that the producers *en masse,* the working class with all its different substratifications, have also become, largely since the 1950s, consumers *en masse.* Working people *do* want choice.

> *"There is only one heresy for socialists — that is the refusal to face reality. It is not just an abandonment of rational democratic socialism but its very negation"*

That failure on our part has on occasions bordered on contempt. I recall some years ago Tony Benn commented that the problem with some working people was that when they purchased a brass door knocker for their front door they thought they should vote Tory. A humorous aside perhaps, but one which could only be made by someone whose vision of working people was akin to the "Noble Savage" concept held of Africans by 18th century white missionaries.

That failure to see working people as consumers as well as producers is not our only one. Until relatively recently we have obstinately refused to recognise that a particular *form* of social ownership — nationalisation — may have been progressive in the 1940s but has utterly failed to meet the new demands of the generations since then. Moreover, by turning that political form of public ownership and control into a sacred cow, we have denied ourselves and the people we seek to represent a whole array of different forms potentially more fitting for modern circumstances.

Not a yuppie conversion

We have shied away from the political and industrial challenge presented by the new patterns of employment, particularly the growth of the public sector. For the two-fifths of the workforce now engaged in public services, from teachers to nurses, industrial action now entails the social deprivation of other workers or their families, not the economic deprivation of capitalist bosses.

The nature of the production process in manufacturing and service industries, in particular the increasing use of new technology, now tends to diminish workers' alienation from the production process and to undermine their perceived need for collective security. Where there is an erosion of basic trade union consciousness, the task of attracting people to socialism is more difficult.

And, while a quarter of the population are unemployed or impoverished, the other three-quarters, despite Thatcher's attacks, benefit from material conditions almost unthinkable four decades ago. Their support, the support of the relatively well-off, is a prerequisite of any democratic socialist advance. This is not a conversion to yuppieism. It is the only meaningful alternative to the tea, tears and sympathy which is all we can dispense to the disadvantaged as long as we remain in opposition. Above all, perhaps in economic policy we have to shift away from relying on a carping criticism of Thatcherism.

Unemployment, disastrous as it may be, is here, a reality; it will still be here in the mid-1990s. North Sea oil has been all but squandered already, and will have all but run out by the end of the century. In those circumstances, what are we actually going to *do* if and when we come to power in the 1990s?

None of these questions will be resolved by closing our eyes to them, or by courting short-term popularity. Like any institution, the Labour Party does not easily accept change, even when the world has changed around it. They will not be solved merely by blanket defence of everything in the state sector or a blind condemnation of everything in the private. Least of all will they be remedied by the publication of another list of "demands".

And, of course, there will be some who, fearing that reference to contemporary reality might illustrate the redundancy of some or many of our presently held views, will try to hold onto them in the only way possible — by turning them into religious canons which cannot be questioned without lapsing into heresy. That should not stop us. There is only one heresy for socialists — that is the refusal to face reality. It constitutes not just an abandonment of rational, democratic socialism, but its very negation. The opportunity *is* there for Labour. We *have* made a start. The principle has been established. The reviews will not answer every question, but they should at the very least identify the questions that *have* to be answered.

Far from fearing the outcome of revising our views, democratic socialists should be revisionists in principle. □

Dr John Reid is Labour MP for Motherwell North and a former political adviser to Neil Kinnock.

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Anti-anti-gay backlash

Despite everything, the campaign against Section 28 may have won the war with the bigots behind Britain's new anti-gay law, report* DUNCAN CAMPBELL *and* LYN BARLOW. *But who will win the peace?

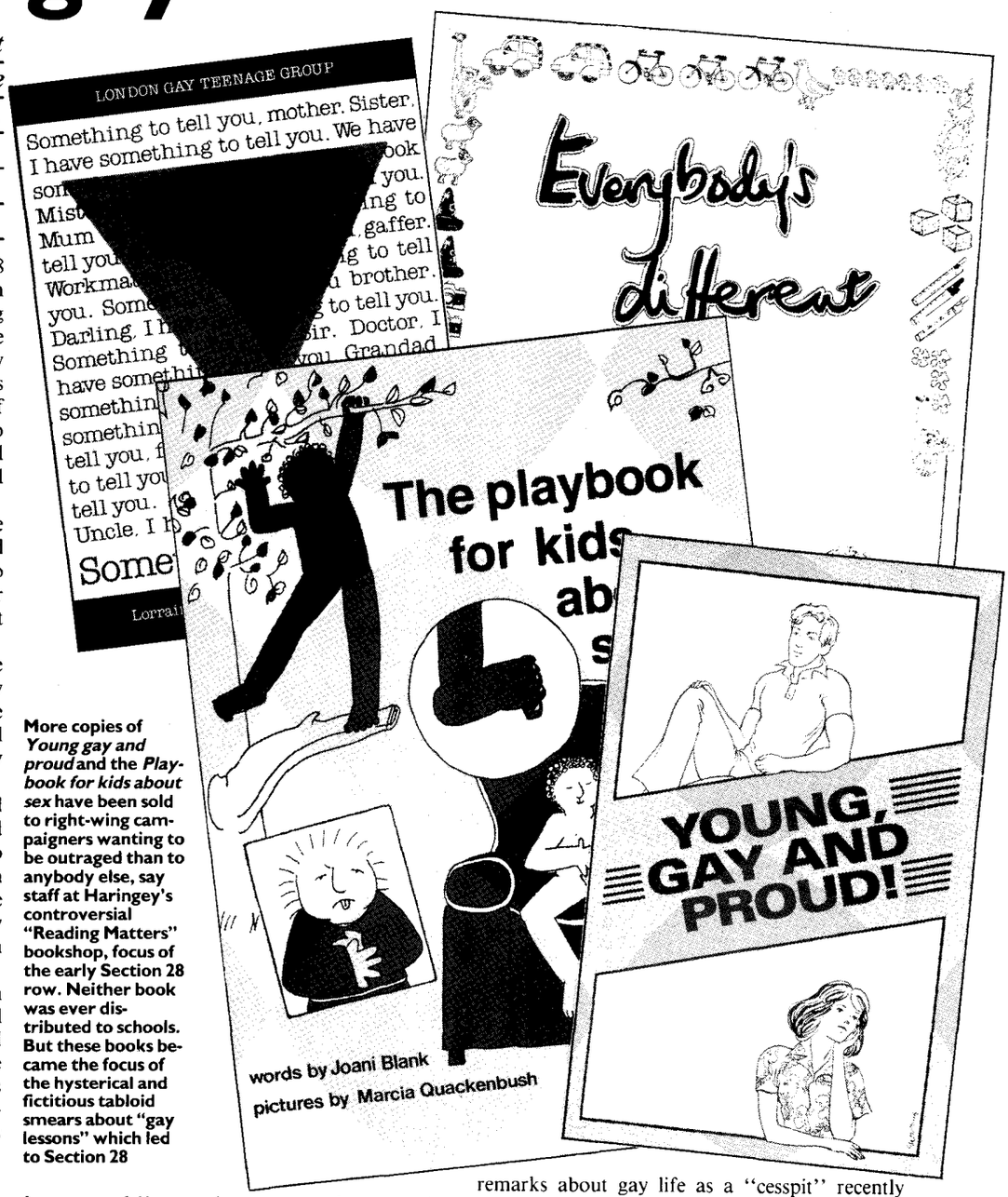
SECTION 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 came into force Tuesday morning. The Section bans local councils from "intentionally promoting homosexuality". Nor may they "promote the teaching . . . of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools under their charge. But the most damaging part of the original clause — which banned grants to groups supporting gays and lesbians and required no test of a local council's intentions — were axed more than three months ago.

It is always inadvisable to assess the damage before the last battle is over. But there are good grounds for expecting that, despite its passage into law, the combined effects of the arts and other lobbies against the clause have mitigated its worst features.

The Section began as a response to a public tissue of fantasy about left-wing councils giving "gay lessons" to school children, created largely by the tabloids. All that they may actually have achieved is the banning of these tabloid fantasies — the gay lessons and school books that never were.

Nevertheless, the section does create sexual apartheid — in which one type of personal and sexual relationship is to be officially preferred to another. In the end, it may be the introduction of a principle of discrimination into law, and the legitimacy with which prejudice is consequently endowed, that will probably cause real long-term damage to human rights.

In the two areas of public life that the Section affects, the prognoses are very different. Local council funding of welfare activities with a gay and lesbian context — including centres and telephone helplines — can and will (unless court judgments unexpectedly supervene) continue almost as before. But honesty about homosexuality in schools is under threat.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for kids
YOUNG, GAY AND PROUD!
words by Joani Blank
pictures by Marcia Quackenbush

More copies of *Young gay and proud* and the *Playbook for kids about sex* have been sold to right-wing campaigners wanting to be outraged than to anybody else, say staff at Haringey's controversial "Reading Matters" bookshop, focus of the early Section 28 row. Neither book was ever distributed to schools. But these books became the focus of the hysterical and fictitious tabloid smears about "gay lessons" which led to Section 28

Legions of homophobes

Research last week by the national lesbian and gay newspaper *Pink Paper* found little evidence that legions of well-to-do homophobes were waiting in the wings with court actions to launch on Tuesday morning. Indeed, in the cockpit of the pro and anti-gay struggle — the London Borough of Haringey — the first round of the Section 28 fight has already resulted in a first round knockout against the homophobes. When last month the most active of local anti-gay councillors proposed the immediate axing of the council's lesbian and gay unit, it was the Conservative Party and the local Conservative MP who led the backlash against the homophobes — attacking "schemes for exploiting the clause" and praising government statements which asserted that "fairness to homosexuals" was as important as the prevention of its "promotion" in schools.

The latest legal opinion on the meaning of the clause by the Association of London Authorities and the London Boroughs' Grants Committee argues that "it is open to serious doubt whether it will render unlawful many decisions or actions presently lawful". Of the raft of activities originally feared likely to fall foul of the clause (including gay and lesbian meeting places, bars and clubs; books, plays and films by homosexual writers), only the never-yet-implemented plans for "positive images" programmes in schools now seem doomed.

Life has not been happy for homophobes outside Haringey either. The standing of Manchester Chief Constable James Anderton, whose remarks about gay life as a "cesspit" recently gained considerable prominence, has hardly benefitted from deputy John Stalker's revelation of his claim that the Holy Finger had written that speech for him on a breakfast table. When last month his daughter Carol publicly came out as lesbian herself, arguments about how easily schools might promote same-gender relationships came rather unstuck. If homosexuality could arise naturally *chez la famille* Anderton, it could scarcely be regarded as the product of external "promotion".

In February, in a debate at the Oxford Union, the doyen of parliamentary gay baiters, Geoffrey Dickens MP, publicly recanted on his previous demands for the recriminalisation of homosexuality and the closing of gay meeting places. Dickens said that he had learned information making him

Cont on p. 18

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No such thing as anti-racist ideology

One of the foremost thinkers on race, class and politics,* A. SIVANANDAN, *dissects the left's errors and the right's hypocrisy as illuminated by the Manchester school stabbing case

RACISM KILLED Ahmed Ullah on the playing fields of Burnage — not anti-racism, if by "anti" we simply mean "opposed to", "against". But anti-racism as practised in Burnage was, on the showing of the Macdonald Report*, an accessory before and after the fact — merely by virtue of failing its own purpose. That it did so, however, owes not a little to the confusion and bewilderment of the left as to the nature of racism and how to combat it on the one hand, and to the sustained attack on anti-racism by the New Right, on the other.

The fight against racism is, in the first instance, a fight against injustice, inequality, against freedom for some and un-freedom for others. But because racism is inextricably woven into hierarchies of power, of exploitation, and in some instances (as in South Africa) determines those hierarchies, the fight against racism is, in the final analysis, a fight against such exploitative power.

Both power and racism, however, have personal connotations, are easily reducible (and in everyday living are so reduced) to individuals, the positions they hold, the roles they fulfil. And so the fight against racism sometimes takes on the dimension of a personalised fight against an individual — as though to change the person (or his or her personality) is to change the office, the institution. When such confusion is carried over into policy, it tends not so much to alter the course of racial injustice as to damage the larger fabric of natural justice.

Maureen McGoldrick, for instance, was suspended from her school headship by Brent council on suspicion of being a racist (on the basis of a remark she is said to have made in a telephone conversation) and therefore in contravention of the anti-racist policies that the council wished to carry out in education. At no point before suspension was she afforded a full hearing or accorded the benefit of her past record. And however much the issues might have been muddied by the yellow press or muddled by a reactionary teachers' union, the fact remains that the council, in its anxiety to do right by black children, did wrong by Ms McGoldrick. Whereas the fight for racial justice, if rightly fought, must of its very nature improve and enlarge justice for all.

*A report on the stabbing of a Manchester schoolboy in 1986 by a committee chaired by Andrew Macdonald, a left-wing barrister, one-third of which was published by Manchester city council last week (22 of the 33 chapters were withheld for libel reasons).

It is also a fact — and a sad one — that black councillors and officers who know how the "sus law" has been used against their young should themselves administer "sus" by some other name. They had, in Eliot's grand phrase, had the experience but missed the meaning.

As a result Ms McGoldrick was handed over as a casus belli to the genuine racists in our midst and to the racist media in particular, who were only too willing to espouse her cause in order to discredit the cause of anti-racism — as they now do over Burnage.

It was left to the "thinkers" of the New Right, however, to mount a "considered" attack on anti-racism by weaving together — with slovenly scholarship and consummate humbug — its foibles and its failings and presenting these as the fabric of its philosophy. A whole book, *Anti-racism: an assault on education and value*, was directed to this exercise, and a biased programme in *Diverse Reports* "examined" the subject so "critically" as to still the voices of those, like me, who tried to say that there was no body of thought called anti-racism, no orthodoxy or dogma, no manual of strategy and tactics, no demonology.

> *"In absolving the state and its institution of racism, the burden of "racial disadvantage" was passed on to the minorities — as though it were they who were wanting in something"*

What there was in our society was racism, in every walk of life, and it had to be opposed — in every conceivable way. And because racism was hydra-headed, and reared its different heads in different ways in different times (prosperity and depression) and in differing relations (employment, housing, schools) and different places (inner city, suburbia), the ways of fighting racism were also different and legion. Nor were there any short-cuts to its demise. Racism had been a long time in the making and would take a long time to die. "Anti-racism", therefore, was a portmanteau word meant to carry all these differing ideas and ways of combatting racism. The important thing, however, was to keep racism from corrupting society to decay.

A fight for culture

If anti-racism for the New Right was an assault on *their* education and values, it was for the New ("social forces") Left an essay in cultural politics, personal politics — which, in practice, descended into culturalism, ethnic politicking, inter-personal relations, identity-seeking. The fight against racism became a fight for culture, and culture itself was evacuated of its economic and political significance to mean life-style, language, custom, artefact. And black, from being a "political colour" was broken down into its cultural parts of West Indian, Asian, African — and these in turn reduced to their ethnic constituents. Since local council funding was largely geared to "ethnic need", there was a sudden flowering of a thousand ethnic groups. Everybody was ethnic now — Irish, Italians, Rastas, Sikhs, Chinese, Jews, Bengalis, Gypsies — and they all vied with each other for "ethnic hand-outs" and "ethnic positions" and set themselves against each other, politicking for "ethnic power".

But, curiously enough, where this credo of ethnic need first arose was not in the antechambers of socialist local councils but in the liberal pages of Scarman's report on *The Brixton Disorders*. The evidence before Lord Scarman — the police force were battering down the homes of black people in Brixton with sledgehammers as he sat — pointed implacably to institutional and state racism. But, like so many adjudicators before him, so unquestioning was Lord Scarman's belief in the fairness of British institutions that he set his face resolutely against any criticism of them. Instead, he leant over backwards — and you need such a mixed metaphor to convey the contortions of his lordship's position — to restore the balance of justice against "racial disadvantage", by means of "positive action" in terms of "ethnic need". The idea was to help racial or ethnic minorities to overcome their specific disadvantages so as to bring them up to the same level as the rest of society — and then leave them, like everyone else, to the vagaries of market forces.

But, in absolving the state and its institutions of racism, the burden of "racial disadvantage" was passed on to the minorities themselves — as though it were they who were wanting in something. An infliction had become an affliction, a disadvantage a disability — and passed under the rubric of "ethnic need". The remedy, therefore, was to be sought in ethnic programmes and ethnic policy, not in dismantling racist structures and outlawing racism.

It was, at best, a laissez-faire view of racism which brooked no state intervention, least of all in its own affairs and institutions, except in the lesser matters of administration such as recruitment and training, say, of police officers.

But for left-wing councils, casting around for anti-racism policies in the wake of the inner city "riots" of 1981, Scarman was a godsend. "Positive action" and "ethnic need", besides, seemed to have a socialist ring to them — holding out the prospects of socialist planning without detracting from the morality of socialist caring. Having themselves failed to incorporate or relate to the struggles of the black working class in the post-war years and see how they advanced the struggle of the

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Shane McGowan

class as a whole, the white left had no social frame of reference to fight racism and, by default, turned to Scarman. Fighting racism the way that blacks had fought it looked like bucking the system, whereas upholding "ethnicism" was a safe bet.

Racism personalised

In the process, the fight was taken out of the streets and the communities and into the town halls — to be played out in committees and cabals. And racism itself became personalised to individuals, white individuals in power, in the institutions of the local state. Scarman, in denying the existence of institutional racism, had shifted its centre of gravity to the individual. The town hall socialists however, applying a corrective to Scarman, kept institutional racism but changed its definition to mean "prejudice plus power" — i.e. personal prejudice plus the power she or he has as a white official to translate that prejudice into (racist) practice. So all you had to do was to make him or her aware of his or her racism — through RAT (Racism Awareness Training) classes — and prejudice, discrimination, would go out of power and make things fairer for blacks. Power, that is, was a matter of inter-personal relationships, and by changing individuals you changed the relationships that determined the power structures. Conversely, and this was not so much in the original RAT writ as in its codicil, if black people were to challenge such power effectively, they should become aware of who they were and what they could do — find out what their real identity was in terms of race, class, gender and raise their particular blend of consciousness.

The workings of RAT — born in a military base in Florida, reared at the University of Oklahoma by Judy Katz (see her *White Awareness handbook for anti-racism training*) and officially held up in this country a year before the 1981 disturbances by the Race Relations Advisor to the Home Office — and its subsequent spread all over Britain have been examined in these pages before (*NS*, 7 and 14 June 1985). What is important to note here, however, is the imputation of guilt that underlined its philosophy and informed its every practice. White people, RAT held, were by virtue of their history and upbringing guilty of racism. And, even when they fought their racism, they were still no more than anti-racist racists — because racism was immanent in the white psyche, part of its collective unconscious . . . in the blood perhaps? . . . or it was original sin. The argument bordered on the genetic and blended the religious with the socio-biological.

But even after RAT was killed off by black activists and buried — with a memorial service held appropriately enough at the GLC in its dying days — it got reincarnated as ART, Anti-Racist Training, and continued to purvey guilt under other guises.

It is that sense of guilt, of personal guilt, which marked the events at Brent and at Burnage — the one inflicted by the authorities, the other self-inflicted.

But then guilt itself has begun to replace shame

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as a moral value in society at large. Guilt, as Helen Merrell Lynd has pointed out, closes one down on oneself, internalises one's inadequacies, and breeds a sense of helplessness. Above all, it tries to live up to the standards set out by others for one. Shame, on the other hand, sets one's own standards for oneself, opens one out to one's own possibilities and those of others. To be guilty of racism is to have transgressed someone else's standards, to be ashamed of it is to fail one's own.

Shame, however, has gone out of Thatcherite Britain — the shame of being a racist, of being a capitalist, of getting power, making money, regardless of all else, everyone else. We have been taken over by the morality of grocer capitalism, merchant capitalism, buy and sell capitalism where profit is only tempered by Calvinist moralism — and it is the same set of values that has trickled down into the race relations industry.

Morality of social justice

Of course, there is a morality involved in the fight against racism, but it refers not to the morality of individuals but to the morality of social justice. It is the prosperous, sanctimonious right that prescribes morals to people and, from the height of its smug conceit, ordains how people should think and behave. It is a moralism that reflects a mean, narrow, closed-down, ungenerous view of life — one that does not take risks with people, with human relationships, enlarge human creativity, "exhaust" in Pindar's phrase "the realm of the possible". It seeks, instead, to gather up all the infinite variety of human experience and force it into the ungiving mould of its own righteousness.

And it does it in the name of the individual, as though the individual grows in solitary confinement, removed from the collective good, in competition with everyone, trying to do the other in, instead of raising the other up and oneself with it.

The left's mistake was to accept this spurious equation of individual growth with individualism and confuse personal moralism with socialist morality. Both individualism and moralism are of course potent ingredients in the witches' brew of right-wing fundamentalism.

It is such a fundamentalism that informs certain aspects of the proposed Education Bill — in particular its national curriculum which not only narrows the focus of the subjects that it prescribes as core, such as history, to a one-dimensional nationalist perspective but discourages at the same time the study of international subjects such as Peace Studies or Black Studies. Children are not to be put at risk to the world outside, opened out to the experience of other races and peoples, or encouraged to look at themselves and their histories from the vantage point of such experience.

On the contrary, they are not even to be taught to relate healthily to the different experiences and cultures of the fellow students around them through an education in other cultures and in the racism of their own — which renders those other cultures inferior. Instead they are, if the New Right continues to have its say, to be afforded a "colour-blind", conflict-free education in a world replete with colour and conflict. □

A. Sivanandan is director of the Institute of Race Relations and editor of "Race and Class".

"temper" his views about gays and Aids.

The clause has also united the gay and lesbian community, often condemned for an almost total lack of political awareness, and rallied an arts lobby no more political in outlook. This was despite, or perhaps because of, the early failure of parliamentary opposition by the Labour Party. The marches we joined in London and elsewhere, twenty or thirty thousand strong, were the largest ever seen in Britain on issues of sexuality. In half a dozen countries abroad, British embassies and missions were also the targets for demonstrations.

Terrorised teachers

While metropolitan councils may not now see their powers significantly curbed by Section 28, the already ill-disposed will quickly pray it in to support existing discrimination. This is still widespread, as an inspired enquiry by a group of Sheffield University students showed last week. The students polled 30 local venues with a request to book for a university Lesbian and Gay group. More than half, 16, said no. Of these, precisely three-quarters turned out to have the asked-for facilities available and unbooked when asked for the same booking by the university "bridge club".

> *". . .teachers are already having to live in a reign of terror whereby any mention of homosexuality is a hazard to career and reputation, considerate counselling of children about gay feelings is fraught with peril"*

Not far away, the director of a Leeds college recently created a public row when he tried to restrict the meetings of his college's own student lesbian and gay society. And in Bradford, mathematics teacher Dr Austin Allen was sacked for coming out (as gay himself) to a class. He has since been reinstated. But his case has become one of many which now terrorise all teachers who have to help or advise their pupils on issues affecting sexuality.

Several teachers to whom we have spoken express considerable anxiety about new attempts to restrict syllabuses. In particular, one of the most popular study books this year in English Language A levels is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, which deals with a prominent and positively expressed lesbian relationship. The women are also black, which is scarcely likely to soften the attitude of more actively homophobic Conservative councillors. Yet it is (for the moment) scheduled in 1990 to become one of the set texts of the Associated Examining Board, one of the largest national boards.

It has been suggested that if pupils were to learn that Isaac Newton were gay, physics teachers might have to stop teaching the law of gravity — or say that it had been discovered instead by a respectable heterosexual. This sounds like a parody of the law — but this week's BBC2 *Brass Tacks* programme highlighted the new predicament of teachers required to teach works of Eng. Lit. much less recent or controversial than *The Color Purple* — Shakespeare's Sonnets. The Sonnets are exceptionally and inexplicably ambiguous about the sex of the person to whom they are addressed. Scholars and English teachers fear that it could now be impermissible to suggest that these indicate Shakespeare's own homosexuality.

And last year, long before the clause was drafted, Exeter council punished Exeter Arts Centre for putting on the play 'Compromised Immunity', by Gay Sweatshop, withdrawing £10,000 of grants.

Inalienable right to be gay

Until 1987, the government had contained and ignored the uglier demands of the far right. But as the general election loomed, Norman Tebbit unveiled posters claiming that Labour's "idea of comprehensive education" was to distribute such books to schoolchildren as "young, gay and proud". The Prime Minister herself took the next step of launching an attack on gays at the 1987 Conservative Party conference, four months after her re-election. "Children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay," Mrs Thatcher said.

The rabid right were unleashed and up and running. Clause 27 (as it was originally numbered) was accepted on 8 December into the new Local Government Bill. Dame Jill Knight MP had claimed that "hundreds of thousands of pounds were being spent by some councils in promoting homosexuality in our schools". She gave the Radio 4 *AM* programme a few days later an interview in which she was asked for her evidence for these claims. Her files, she said, had regrettably been "left at home".

The two main consequences of the Section as law are probably assured already — one tiresome and the other literally lethal. Lesbian and gay telephone help lines and units supported by local authorities can probably continue to be grant-aided, although a significant and growing portion of their funds will probably have to be spent on lawyers' fees. The larger consequence now guaranteed is that children — whose welfare the proponents of Section 28 so hypocritically claim to be their central concern — will lose out, badly. Their teachers are already having to live in a reign of terror whereby any mention of homosexuality is a hazard to career and reputation, considerate counselling of children about gay feelings is fraught with peril, and "coming out" in class may be likely to invoke instant dismissal.

The real victims of the section will not be adult teachers, but young men and women in adolescence — who once again will have to grow up believing it wrong for them to know happiness or to find stable partnerships, or to be other than third class citizens. Already, the paths to self-discovery for roughly ten per cent of men and women who are gay are cloudy with despair and suffering. A survey two years ago of gay men and lesbians who had had to come to terms with their sexuality in their teens found that one in five had made attempts on their own lives. In the wake of Section 28, that path will be more than ever strewn with the corpses of those who come to believe it better to procure their own death than to live life and love true to their own needs and desires. □

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BIG RED BIKE RIDE

JUNE 18th – JULY 3rd 1988

PEDALS FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

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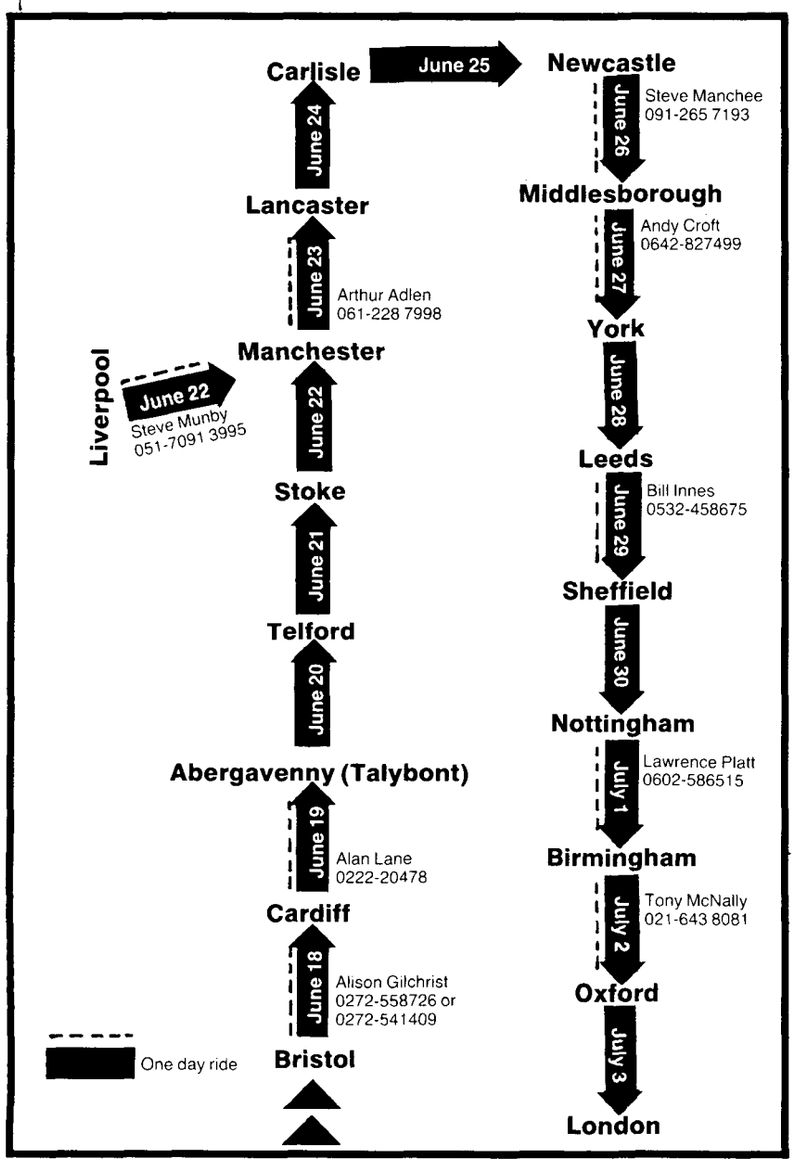

The BRBR is only open to **sponsored** riders. You can join the BRBR for as long as you like – a single stage, several stages, or 1000 miles. At the end of each day all the organisations for which people are riding will combine for a fund raising benefit.

WHO'S ORGANISING IT? The BRBR was initiated by the Communist Party with the support of Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, Chile Solidarity Campaign and Brixton Cycles.

HOW TO JOIN IN. All applications to ride, even for one day, must be made to BRBR. Send SAE (for application form and further details) to BRBR, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY, or ask for Dave or Judith on 01-251 4406.

WHAT IT COSTS

1 DAY	£5.00	includes B&B, back-up vehicles, "bike doctors", "mapped out" routes, insurance and free gigs.
2 DAYS	£10.00	
3-7 DAYS	£20.00	
8-16 DAYS	£30.00	

For details of Birmingham to London final weekend ride from Birmingham International Station (£10.00 all in) phone Sheila Gray 01-675 5372 or contact BRBR.

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STATE OF THE NATION

John Lloyd

Why the electricians must stay

TO WALLOW for a few sentences in nostalgia: didn't the labour movement have much better *fights* in the old days!

The debates then were matters of vast principle: the struggle between Communism and Social Democracy, workers' power versus liberal democracy, production for use as against production for profit.

Read TUC and union conference debates in the 1940s and early 1950s, study the career of Jack Tanner, a left winger and "fellow traveller" who rose to be President of the engineering union, AEU, and who turned, in the late forties, to the right because he could no longer hide from himself the nature and (as he saw it) the failure of the Soviet Union.* See with what importance the views and votes of workers' organisations were then taken by governments all over the west, as their leaderships fought against, or fought through, a Communism and an allegiance to the Soviet Union which is now flippantly dismissed as "Stalinism" but was then the badge, often, of purity and commitment — qualities which were equally in evidence on the social democratic side of the argument, though lacking the worm in the kernel.

Yet beneath these huge divides, there was agreement, born in part from the experience of the war. The agreement was on the importance of *production*; that only through increasing its efficiency could working-class living standards be advanced. The struggle between right and left today lacks such a clearcut framework, *and* such a fundamental agreement. As Peter Kellner noted in *The Independent* on Monday, the British labour movement is messy, non-ideological and only spasmodically capable of rigour in thought. Its left has declined dramatically in numbers and coherence. The Communist Party now largely exists as an intellectual ginger group; the dissident Communists who still engage in militant trade union work are few and desperately sectarian; the Trotskyists continue to look for, and find, traitors in every quarter of a working class still (inexplicably) misled by them; the Campaign Group is a collection of sub-Trotskyists, super-libertarians, hyper-publicists and old believers whose beliefs were never fully articulated because they cannot logically co-exist; the Tribune Group is inchoate and its newspaper stale; the Socialist Society gathers together some clever people but they are usually more impressive individually than when aggregated under its aegis.

Only one vision stands out from this terrible mess. That of Tony Benn, who remains the sole individual capable of expounding, and creating an audience for views which have an idealistic splendour which can move and inspire. This is not to romanticise a man who did more than anyone else to lead the Labour Party into chaos. It is to recognise that he speaks to something real, even if it cannot reach much further, now, than the super-politicised stratum of the middle class.

And, crucially, he had almost nothing to say about production. The silence of the left on this has, more than any other element, lost it the support of working people and the electorate as a whole. For to the usually unspoken questions (how is it organised? how paid for? who made by? and for?) there has been no answer which is not already given by ideology, rather than by observable common sense or technical deduction.

When, in the late forties and early fifties, Japanese managements smashed the then highly militant, highly politicised and very strike-prone Japanese unions (this was a time when workers *and* managers spent much of their time finding enough to *eat*) they were able to do so because the bulk of the workers, mostly recently-off-the-fields peasants, failed to see how their militant union leaders could pay for their miserable rations of rice. To be sure, the Japanese employers, on occasion, used goons and thugs and *yakusa* gangsters to smash the unions; but the internal rot was more insidious. The union leaders gave the workers no plan for a *productive* society; the management, as it recovered strength and self confidence, did.

THIS IS a roundabout way of arguing that the electricians' union should stay in the TUC. Not because to leave would create the focus for a split union movement — though there is little doubt that would be damaging. Not because it should learn to obey rules, though it is clear it has flouted some; but because the electricians, together with the engineers, *are now making the case for production and they have a long way to go before their case is complete.*

The right has played this role, in a somewhat muted, almost embarrassed, form, for the past three decades. The left gave up on the old consensus over production, a renunciation which contributed to its decline. The left seemed to forget, at least in its public utterances, that its salient projects of increased democracy, higher pay and better conditions and shorter hours implied, indeed demanded, a very large growth in productivity both absolutely and relative to those countries, like the other west European states and crucially Japan — which were all getting more productive faster. It was not that left-wing union officials did not sign productivity deals; but they did so for as large a price as possible and as quietly as possible. It was not, in the main, the currency of the conference rostrum. Nor was it that the employers were not largely to blame for shirking what was their prime responsibility; they were, but sooner or later they were bound to realise that fact and either give up or do something about it. Much of what we call Thatcherism is their doing something about it — spurred and aided, of course, by the government.

Lacking a production ethic of its own, whether a left or right-wing version, the labour movement has floundered. But now it has at least two major unions — the electricians and the engineers — which are prepared to make the deeply unpopular argument that industrial production, though leaner, really *is* fitter, should get fitter still, and that the dislocation that will cause will be as nothing to the further dislocation to be caused if we don't carry on getting more efficient. They remain wedded to the left in this sense: that while this more efficient production will take place within a private sector, it should be framed within a context of a society prepared to legislate for social justice, prepared to provide collectively and prepared to put a reasonable partnership in industry onto the agenda once more.

The argument for efficiency has in effect been won in the private sector (though actually *doing* it is, in places, a different matter).

IT IS in the public sector where the case has to be put and carried. And it is more important to the labour movement's chances of revival that it *is* put, strongly, there. For that is the sector for which the left is accurately seen as "responsible". It is there where it must now demonstrate more than just a caring rhetoric, and start to develop some caring practice.

That means efficiency. It means importing into the public services many of the criteria of the private; it means that the pursuit of social justice through social institutions must be undertaken with the same kind of avidity that the pursuit of profit attracts in the City of London. The City, of course, has the cash nexus: Porsches and 'poo. But the left does not hold with the motivating hegemony of the cash nexus: it believes it can motivate on different grounds for different reasons. We must hope that it is right.

The argument for doing this will come best from within the unions themselves — complementing the pressures already upon them from the Labour Party, anxious to look good for a future election. And from Labour councils, finally facing up to responsibilities to manage well — responsibility that has been long delayed by battles on cuts. If it can be won, and a momentum created for a public service which combines efficiency with social justice — or rather, uses the first to attain the second — then we could witness a tremendous turnaround in Labour's standing. As the West German and Swedish labour movements have found, unions which can grasp part of the power over the means of production, distribution and exchange, and discharge their part of a bargain with capital, live to tell a relatively healthy tale even through lean years.

If the British union movement does not rise to this challenge, it will probably continue to decline. Though there *should* be no reason why it should drag the Labour Party with it, the umbilical cord which connects, long overdue for snipping, is likely to mean that the Party follows suit. The best chance of the challenge being met is if the argument which is presently tearing the electricians out of the TUC continues within the TUC's ranks. If the forces which see that there is no alternative to modernisation stay in and grow, then the left has a real chance. The stakes are that high. □

** I'm grateful to Denis MacShane for these arguments: his book on trade unions and the cold war will appear soon.*

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Poszgay — Hungary's man of the hour

Imre Poszgay has been catapulted into the top three in Hungary's ruling apparatus. He's also the ruling party's leading ideologue.* MARY KALDOR *spoke to him and explored the limits of political reform in Hungary

"WE HAVE gone farther than Czechoslovakia in 1968. What was destabilising in 1968 is a factor for stability in 1988," Imre Poszgay, Hungary's leading reformist — and now probably No.2 in the hierarchy — told the western media immediately after the weekend's tumultuous events. Poszgay, 52, has been openly pressing for reform since last year as leader of the People's Patriotic Front — a state-run umbrella organisation for a variety of intellectual and religious groups.

Poszgay is already being feted by the western press as a "radical" reformist of heretical views (see, for example, Monday's *Independent*). A Hungarian intellectual gave me a more sceptical view: "He is the man of the hour. Because he offers some possibilities to established intellectuals who don't want to lose their job, their car or their house in the country, but would like to be able to express some critical views, to be more honest intellectually."

Meeting him made me aware of the limits to the space the reform tendency in the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party offers the Hungarian people. Poszgay is the Party's thinker. He has thought through the implications of political reform, but his thinking remains firmly within the Bolshevik tradition. Radical possibly, heretical no; Poszgay is above all a pragmatic politician who is perhaps most accurately described as the best reformist that Hungary has.

I interviewed Poszgay before the dramatic conference which promoted him to the Party's ruling Politburo — at a time when he would naturally be cautious. I asked him first about the possibilities of political pluralism in Hungary. He replied that pluralism already existed. Hungary had become more equal socially over the past 40 years, with a growing middle class and a more complex division of labour. "These tendencies have resulted in a complicated system of interests; pluralism is present in the public consciousness, both in the articulation of these interests and on a level of ideology." But political reforms in 1985 to introduce "the principle of representation" had proved primitive and contradictory, he said. "The political institutions still work as though this pluralism did not exist."

Poszgay explained:

> Political reform has to transcend this situation. The reason why political reform has always been a very delicate question is that people tend to think in terms of a party system; they conceive of reform in terms of liberal democracy. But this approach has two disadvantages. It frightens those people who at present defend the existing political system. And it gives illusions to radical groups. There is one strategic point that you cannot overlook here in this society. Both the internal political situation and our international ties require that any process of change should be based on stability. The level of integration that society has achieved so far should be viewed as a basic precondition and not as something to be destroyed . . . The political reform cannot have another starting point; otherwise it might unleash all sorts of uncontrollable processes.
>
> The question, of course, arises: Is this starting-point obvious enough for the public and would it be accepted? It might be considered too little to satisfy their expectations. Are we in time or are we late? In this respect, this year will be crucial.

Camera Press

Imre Poszgay: Hungary's best reformist but, above all, a pragmatic politician

Self-organisation

Central to Poszgay's conception of stable reform is self-organisation. "We should open up the gates for people organising themselves. Let's make self-organisation and civil initiatives into a basic right for the Hungarian people." However, this self-organisation would take place within certain limits. "The only obstacle that is legitimate is the Hungarian constitution. This specifically means that socialism and our international relationships [ie, the Warsaw Pact] should be accepted. This is the constitutional basis. But all the rest should be open to debate, including very basic questions of politics.

"This self-organisation and social mobility, in the way I have defined it, would act in the direction of stability. This might sound paradoxical. It would provide time to reform the institutions, especially their hierarchical and vertical character. This includes representative bodies, the relationship between the party and the state, and the relationship between the citizen and the state.

How would self-organisation work in practice? How would I, for example, start an ecological club? He explained that I would have to prepare a draft statute for the association which would have to be examined by a court of law. The court would register the club if there were sufficient members and the statutes did not clash with the two basic constitutional principles [ie, socialism and the Warsaw Pact]. "The court is not supposed to make political judgments."

Suppose then that my club is registered and wanted to organise a demonstration against the proposal for a hydro-electric plant on the Danube [an expensive project that will destroy much beautiful countryside]? What then? Well, that would be possible — provided that the demonstration kept to the issue and the club guaranteed that nobody would give speeches undermining socialism.

But what is socialism? Surely self-organisation must provide some control, some independent check on the activities of the state? Yet registration meant control over self-organisation. If one of the governing principles is "respect for socialism", is not this open to abuse, to very broad interpretation of the law?

"Yes," he said, "and I know that you have just posed the most difficult question. The reason why I am beating around the bush is that I would not want to put my vote on one particular definition of socialism. It is exactly these rigid definitions that have become bankrupt over the last few years. I regard socialism, on the basis of Marx, as a political movement which is characterised by always transcending the present situation."

I pressed him on what might be tolerated in his scheme and what not? What about a club to push for conscientious objection, in Hungary and in other socialist countries? That would be all right, although he added that Hungary was rather tolerant about conscientious objection, and already allowed alternative civil service for religious objectors.

Even so, many conscientious objectors are in prison in Hungary because they object to military service on political grounds. What about a club for international solidarity which may organise a

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demonstration in support of dissidents in Czechoslovakia? No, that would contradict Hungary's international relationships and provide arguments for the opponents of reform.

What about Solidarity?

And what about Solidarity? Is that a good example of an independent trade union? He thought that Solidarity had held out a lot of promise. But it exercised enormous influence without having an internal control system, and so became extremist and "unfit for power". "That was the reason for its defeat." The necessary control could be exercised through registration and representation in parliament.

Poszgay has taken a strong stand in favour of independent publishing. He argued that the state should not manage or control the press and the Communist Party should restrict itself to controlling the party press. There would, he explained, be a press law which would allow magazines and books to be published as long as they conform to the constitution. Could *Beszélő*, the widely read *samizdat* journal of the democratic opposition, be published? "I don't think they keep within the law. They transcend these consensus limits."

Then he corrected himself. "But you shouldn't take what I say for granted, I'm not sufficiently familiar with these publications. I haven't got enough information to say anything judgemental about *Beszélő*. I might be unjust."

Rumour has it that Poszgay, like many other officials, is in fact a regular reader of opposition journals.

I asked about his ideas for parliamentary representation. In 1985, a new election law allowed independent candidates. But in practice, independents like László Rajk, a leading figure in the democratic opposition, were prevented by all kinds of party manoeuvres, such as packing nomination meetings with the workers' militia.

Poszgay thinks that it is important that critical people should be allowed to stand for election. "It's dangerous to leave them outside. Provided, of course, that such critical people accept the minimum consensus — there should be no obstacle to being elected. . . .

We have to make the principle of representation clearer. Certain forms of representation and certain positions should be guaranteed. We should strengthen the parliament in its capacity as a legislative body and in its capacity as a check or control on the state. It should be a forum for the development of policy and political culture. If there are open debates in parliament, this would benefit the public."

But is it possible to strengthen parliament without a multi-party system? "I would rely on these representatives of special interests. The Party should withdraw from these everyday interests. The Party members themselves are divided according to different interests. There is the heavy industry party, the agricultural party, the intellectual party."

Would not this lead to a certain poverty of debate? Political parties have many defects, but still it is surely important to talk about ideas and ideology?

Their arguments are political and not ideological. In principle, I see no obstacles to the creation of a multi-party system under socialism. Indeed, Marx says that where there are no parties and no division of opinion, there can be no progress. I am concerned about political exigencies — the need to preserve stability and the integration of society achieved so far. Any objection to the leading role of the Party would be destabilising. That is why I think that one of the most crucial points is the renewal of the Party. We need a Party that is able to accept new ideas and to solve problems. It needs a built-in political mentality which does not resist unavoidable problems but tries to confront them.

Finally, I asked for his views on *perestroika* and *glasnost*? "In my view, both for socialism and for Hungary, *perestroika* and *glasnost* are positive developments. Not as a model, but as a method. *Perestroika* is a radical and comprehensive overall reform, which is methodologically different from what we did earlier. We had to start with particulars. *Glasnost* is of enormous significance theoretically, but also much more in a practical sense because it can line up the intellectuals behind the reform."

However, he said, Hungary was farther advanced than the Soviet Union with such reforms. "I emphasize again, *perestroika* is not a model. God save us from models again. It is interesting as a method that grabs society in its totality. That's what our reforms never achieved. They were introduced piecemeal. Our circumstances in Hungary are similar to a joke you might have heard. We decide to switch to traffic on the left. But we have to do it gradually — first the bus drivers, then the taxi drivers, then everybody else. This is impossible. We, too, have to formulate a new approach for the whole system. *Perestroika* provides a good international background. The chaotic way that we proceeded here was influenced by the international situation [ie, Soviet pressure]. *Perestroika* gives us more autonomy, the opportunity to decide for ourselves."

Poszgay's ideas on political pluralism clearly put a lot of emphasis on control and stability. He wants "self-organisation" and parliamentary representation, but within the limits — the acceptance of socialism, of the Warsaw Pact and the leading role of the Party — that make it difficult to envisage real checks on state power. When pressed on this contradiction, he emphasised the tactical nature of his thinking.

"The moment you accomplish something, you open up new issues and questions . . . If I formulate my own limits in expressing my views, a much wider space is opened up than exists at present. Within this range, I have very definite views about things, but beyond that it should be left to life and time to decide.

"I am concerned about exigencies in politics. Hungarian political thinking is either very pragmatic in a limited way, or it is based on illusions. There is no communication between these two approaches. What we are really missing is action." □

THE FIRE IN BUDAPEST 2

Hungary turned upside down

You have seen and heard about the official politics of Hungary. But grassroots political life is humming with what Hungarians guardedly call "the new social initiatives". For social, read political.* MARK THOMPSON *reports from Budapest on Hungarian politics from below

IF BUDAPEST is the showroom of Soviet-bloc socialism, then Vaci Utca in the city centre is its plate-glass window. Today it is as busy as ever. Young Hungarians queue to get into the gleaming new McDonalds, being admitted in batches, as if to an exhibition. Around the corner other young people line up outside the Adidas sports shop.

But less conspicuously the city hums with grassroots politics. It's the week of the extraordinary conference of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, of course, and Hungary's "new social initiatives" (as Hungarians guardedly call them) mean to escape from the stultifying censorship under which they work and take full advantage of any publicity that's going.

More generally, however, they are springing up because the 30-year consensus in Hungarian society has come to an end. The conference buried this consensus by bringing Janos Kadar's rule to an end. In fact, it died a year and more ago. True to form, the Party is behind the times and behind Hungarian society.

In a small theatre in east Budapest, about 200 young Hungarians discuss the formal statutes for the new Young Democrats' Federation (FIDESZ). The speeches are a strange, likeable combination of dramatic gravity ("the authorities hang over FIDESZ like the sword of Damocles") and far-out political demands ("army platoons should be self-organising, with *elected* officers").

FIDESZ has created quite a stir since it was set up at the end of March. Its founders adopted a strictly legalistic, non-confrontational stance towards authority, but were quite open about their wider political aims. The bold founding document declares that FIDESZ's activities are intended to "pursue the construction of a new Hungary", and that it will "strive for intellectual and political influence among the youth, in the interest of the wider acceptance of the political values it represents." Already FIDESZ has drawn more than 1,000 members, largely among university students

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in Budapest.

That morning, older, more soberly dressed men and women queue outside a battered dance-hall half a mile away. They are just as excited. They are about to form Hungary's first independent trade union since 1948. The Democratic Trade Union of Scientific Workers (TDDS) is born of long-standing frustration with the existing, official union, combined with a new sense of confidence that *something can be done.*

The meeting should have taken place in university buildings in the centre, but permission was cancelled at the last minute. The dance hall can only hold 200 people, so the meeting splits into two rooms, with a microphone link. This slows the meeting down, but no one seems to mind. Speakers say how glad they are to be setting up an organisation in which "members can represent their own interests without undemocratic restrictions."

"Scientific workers" includes everyone working in the natural and social sciences, and higher education and research institutes. So this is a high-powered political group which calls for the rehabilitation of the Lukacs School of philosophers (Agnes Heller and others), as well as for pension reform. Again the concern for democratic practice and for constitutionality is scrupulous throughout. Like FIDESZ, this new trade union takes a legalistic, non-confrontational stance.

The next day the theatre hosts a third "initiative", the Hungarian Democratic Forum. The building is packed. The audience cuts across the wide social (and age) range, with non-professional workers, pensioners, children. Speeches are relayed on monitors in the stone-flagged foyer. The day's theme is press freedom, and the tone is different from the previous day's gatherings: more rousing and charismatic, less political. In the chair is Zoltan Biro, purged from the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party for involvement with the Forum. He describes the Forum as not only a political but a *spiritual* movement. A succession of writers and intellectuals come to the microphones. Dènes Csengey, a poet, gets the warmest applause, for his tolling list of censored subjects; "Where Imre Nagy is buried: secret. Why Hungary took part in the '68 invasion of Czechoslovakia: secret. Why Hungary won't go to the support of Hungarian minorities abroad: secret . . . "

'People are very angry . . .'

Sandor Szilagy is a founder of *Beszelö,* Hungary's best-known *samizdat* magazine, and now works in support of the Hungarian and Romanian refugees from Transylvania. He explains: "Basically the problem is that people feel they don't have a future. And they are very angry. In a non-democratic system the only legitimacy a government can have is based on standard of living, and this is falling fast. Two or three years ago, new leadership would have been enough — not now. People think they simply *don't have time* for changes to filter down through the system. They have nothing to lose; they want to participate."

The Party cannot make the deep political reforms which it knows are essential for motivating people to rescue Hungary's failing economy. The universal phrase these days is "multi-party system": reformists in and outside the Party claim that it is on the way, just be patient. More radical voices say that unless society mobilises itself and *insists* on political pluralism, the reform won't come. Unlike its neighbour eastern states, Hungary does not even nominally recognise other parties; they were abolished after 1956, and subsumed into the hollow Patriotic People's Front, the mass organisation which the Politburo's leading reformist, Imre Poszgay, has fashioned into a power-base.

"It's not a question of the 'hard-liners' and 'reformists' that western observers talk about", I am told by a professor at the Karl Marx University. "It's a question of being in power. If you know that you are in power because you have a monolopy of power, do you risk losing the monopoly? The Party needs to encourage citizen's initiatives, and it is willing to go as far as it can while retaining control and keeping things *reversible.* But that point cannot be known in advance."

The growth — first slow, now rapid — of the informal citizens' groups — church-orientated, literary, or political — has answered the need for spaces to meet and talk freely. They occupy a grey zone between legality and repression. For more than 20 years, explicit political opposition in Hungary consisted of some 40 people in Budapest — the so-called "democratic opposition". Brilliant, cosmopolitan, multi-lingual, ex-Marxist, often Jewish, now approaching or in middle-age, these people — often known as the "urbanists" — group around the *samizdat* journals *Beszelö, Hirmondo, Demokrata* and others. Their books and articles are translated, and they enjoy tremendous international prestige. They support TDDS and are delighted by the appearance of FIDESZ.

To many in the populist Democratic Forum, the urbanists are out of touch with the Hungarian people. One Forum supporter — a university teacher — describes the democratic opposition as a "little clique which doesn't want *not* to be a clique". Another says that "most of the democratic opposition spends most of its time in New York on grants from the Soros Foundation".

FIDESZ exists outside the urbanist-populist dualism. Vasarhelyi again: "This is the most encouraging symptom, that young people are free from these prejudices, for there is a lot in tradition that is only prejudice. Their whole educaton was different, and they will be much clearer and bolder than us. Also they have not been infected by Marxism. *We* were all communists or anti-communists: Marx was in the centre of our whole thinking."

The writer and oppositionist, Miklos Haraszti, says: "I don't buy substantial *ideas* of democracy any more: democracy as *technique*, not *ideology*!" FIDESZ is very much concerned with "the technique of democracy", and uses existing rights and institutions to make space for itself. On 8 April, leading members were summoned to a police station, where they were told that FIDESZ is an illegal organisation. The students argued their case on constitutional grounds, but were told that charges would be preferred if they did not flatly accept their illegality. Under which paragraph in the civil code would we be charged? they asked; unless it is specified in writing, we shall assume that this is just a friendly chat.

Next day every newspaper carried a Hungarian Press Agency report that FIDESZ was illegal. One paper, *Magyar Hirlap,* added that it was unconstitutional and that "Western capitalist forces" were behind it. FIDESZ responded by doing an extraordinary thing: they warned the Agency and *Magyar Hirlap* that unless they published a correction, legal action would be taken. There was no reply. At the hearing, on 19 May, the judge concluded, inevitably, that the action could not proceed. But FIDESZ was not called illegal, and there was no mention of the hearing next day in the papers. Thanks to western radio, however, the result was known immediately.

It's hard to exaggerate the significance of this affair. In showing that independent initiatives are not quite defenceless, it counteracts the social fear that feeds political apathy. This fear gets scant mention in the west, yet as Haraszti states (even overstates): "In Hungary, the first meaning of Kadar is not liberalism, as is his image in the western press. He is the brutal terrorist of the last 30 years, and as long as he was on the scene it meant, 'We are ready to shoot' — *that's* what Kadar meant. His was the liberalism of the man who killed hundreds with courtroom decisions, and hundreds more without."

A new cautious mood

So now there's a new cautious mood of confidence. Independent groups are trying to make a coalition through the Network for Free Initiatives. With more than 1,300 supporters since its 17 March launch, the Network describes itself as "legal but not official", and wants to develop solidarity between workers and intellectuals.

The western press is out in force at the Network's press conference, the day before the party conference. Yet, once they have asked for the Network's opinions on the leadership, these journalists have nothing to say. Ed Steen of the *Independent* mentions FIDESZ and the Network, only to call them "in effect political parties in waiting" (23 May). This is untrue; these movements can only be translated into familiar terms by distorting them.

As Miklos Vasarhelyi remarked afterwards: "Western journalists come only if there is an event like this party conference, but they don't really understand the life of this country. Don't forget, for all these difficulties, Hungary is the socialist country which has gone furthest with reforms. Civil society in this country is, in my opinion, at least as important as the intrigues and struggles of the leading politicians."

The western media see the new Party boss Grosz as an invigorating reformist, all set to pull Hungary back from the brink. No one yet knows what his policies will be, but the new activists believe that Hungary's problems cannot be solved by an change of leadership. Only the regeneration of society can make their country democratic. Civil society — society outside state and party institutions — needs strengthening. But it cannot be strengthened if it is atomised and unidentifiable. The new movements' first task is to give substance to people's aspirations to participate without fear in political life. They engage the state without confronting it: thus they can only be suppressed illegally or violently. In Czechoslovakia or Romania this would swiftly happen; in Hungary, it may not. So far, the authorities have responded with disinformation — and with competition! A few days after the TDDS meeting, a new *official* union for scientific workers was announced: TDS — without the D for "Democratic". □

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Drugs and sex lurking behind the Bush

ALEXANDER COCKBURN ***examines the extent of George Bush's knowledge of drug-running and wonders how close to President Reagan he really is***

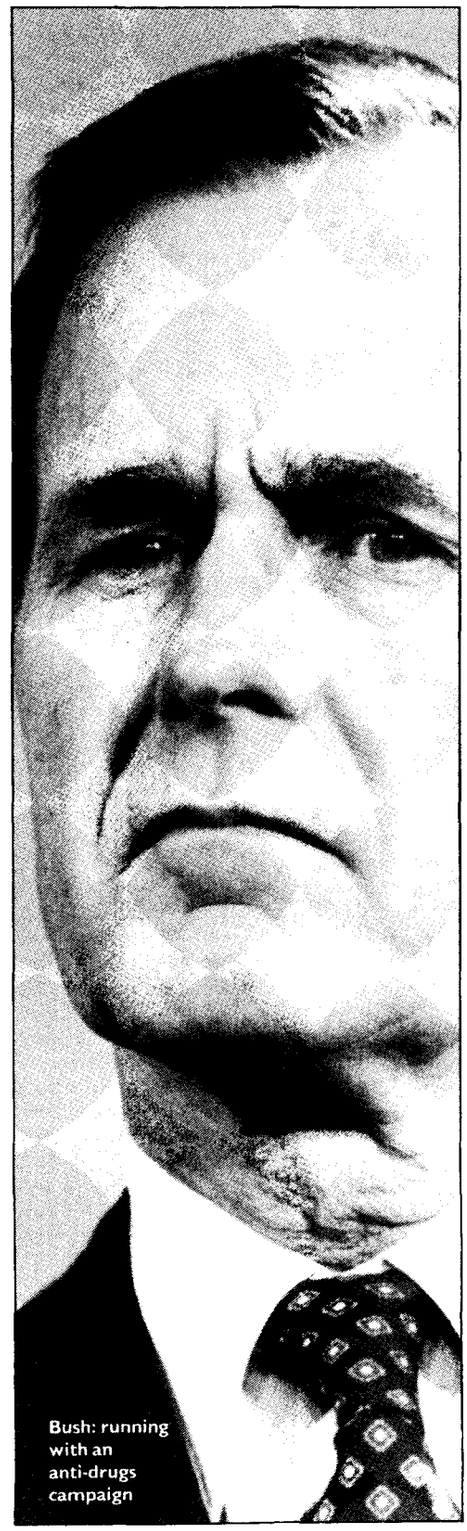
> "Now, you can deny US government involvement in drugs all you want, but the patterns are there and the players are there popping up again and, you know, eventually somebody's going to realise what the truth is." Ramon Milian-Rodriguez, PBS, *Frontline,* 17 May.

Aptos, California

THESE ARE difficult days for Vice President George Bush. Even as he goes about the country promoting the administration's anti-drug campaign, evidence rolls forth demonstrating the involvement of his office and, informants vigorously suggest, himself with drug smugglers in the efforts to supply the Nicaraguan contras. Last week, Darryl Gates, the police chief of Los Angeles, accompanied Bush and platoons of photographers to a "crack house" recently stormed by the LA police. Bush peered earnestly at the wreckage (as an earnest peerer there are few to beat George) and claimed that in the war with the narco-terrorists there would be, at least from him, no quarter, no truce. But the headlines from Washington the same day carried more news to the effect that the Reagan administration was trying to extricate something from the far more serious wreckage of its efforts to unseat General Tony Noriega, by offering Tony a deal whereby he leaves office for a brief spell, having nominated his own successor.

The trouble is that far too many people in the United States for the Vice President's political comfort think that somehow he's been involved in monkey business with the same narco-terrorists he denounces. Pollsters chatting to their cluster groups found about a month ago that Bush and drugs seem somehow to have got unwholesomely welded in the popular mind. This helps explain why he is now ten points behind Michael Dukakis, the likely Democratic nominee, in the polls, though I don't think it needs the drug smuggling imputation to explain Bush's low standing. I've never met an audience that likes the man. Right-wing Republicans think he's a stooge for the trilateralist banking conspiracy. Liberal Republicans think he's a sell-out to the right.

Bush's spirits cannot have been refreshed by a story in the US edition of *Newsweek* for 23 May, partly echoing a piece by Allan Nairn in *The Progressive* a couple of months ago. Richard Brenneke, an Oregon businessman with previous connections to both the CIA and the Israeli Mossad, has now publicly disclosed that he was a point man in an operation called the "Arms Supermarket". In this affair, the Colombian Medellin cocaine cartel, hoping for political advantage, put up money and planes to fly arms to the contras. The arms came from Eastern Europe, acquired there by Brenneke, and were flown to Panama under the supervision of General Noriega's confidant, the former Mossad man, Michael Harari.



Bush: running with an anti-drugs campaign

Camera Press

The drug cartel used the same planes to fly drugs to the United States. In a sworn deposition Brenneke has told a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, headed by Massachusetts senator John Kerry, that Bush's "National Security" aide Donald Gregg was the Washington contact for the operation, and that when he first queried the Israeli contacts on the propriety of the deal they gave him Gregg's office number to call. Brenneke — who says that one of the reasons he is surfacing this information is because of a young relative's drug addiction — discloses that he flew with one such drug shipment to Amarillo, Texas, in mid-1985, and tried to tell Gregg what was going on but received the curt response, "you do what you were assigned to do. Don't question the decision of your betters". Kerry's investigators say they have corroborated part of Brenneke's story from Noriega's former head of political intelligence, José Blandon, and from another former Mossad agent.

The CIA, Laos and opium

In his personal notebooks Oliver North made frequent references to the "Arms Supermarket". An entry for 12 July 1985, recently released by a congressional committee reads, "[White House deletion] plans to seize all . . . when Supermarket comes to a bad end. $14 M[illion] to finance came from drugs." The denials from Gregg that either he or the Vice President knew any of this are looking increasingly bizarre, particularly given Bush's term as CIA director in the mid-1970s when, as he himself likes to put it on other topics, he surely came to know the world as it is, not as it should be. Noriega was on the CIA payroll for a long time. CIA agents tipped off Noriega and his men to the whereabouts of Noriega's foe Hugo Spadafora. Spadafora was soon thereafter found decapitated in Costa Rica just over the frontier from Panama. When the finger of suspicion naturally swivelled towards Noriega, the CIA sent one of their people to Panama from Costa Rica to claim publicly that evidence disclosed that Spadafora had been done in by the Salvadoran FMLN.

As usual it is Noriega, who has done his bit in coarsening the tone of international diplomacy, who put the matter most pithily. Noriega's former sidekick, Col. Roberto Diaz Herrera, says Noriega told him gleefully, "I have Bush by the balls". The problem for Bush is that the historical record suggests an intimate relationship between drug smugglers and US covert operations, and this brings us back to Ramon Milian-Rodriguez, whose remark stands at the head of this article.

Milian-Rodriguez, who is now serving a 43-year

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sentence in a US federal prison for money laundering on behalf of the Colombian Medellin drug cartel, was first recruited as a brilliant young accountant by Manuel Artime in Miami in 1972. Artime was one of the CIA's favourite Cubans, running operations for the Agency out of southern Florida. One of Milian-Rodriguez's early assignments was to arrange the payments for the Watergate burglars and one of his last tasks, before going behind bars in January 1986, was to pass just under $10 million from the cartel to the contras, via Vice President George Bush's man-on-the-spot, an old CIA colleague Felix Rodriguez.

One of the virtues of a recent public television system documentary, commissioned by WGBH and written and directed by Andrew and Leslie Cockburn (for the record, brother and sister in law to the present writer) is that it approached the always interesting matter of the consanguinity of drug trading and covert operations in a structural rather than purely anecdotal fashion. The activity of drug smuggling draws together people of criminal disposition who are philosophically and pragmatically devoted to the "free market" in its fullest amoral stretch, generates large amounts of "unregistered" money, and is at a strategic angle of contact between the First World and the Third, like slavery and the strategic spices in an earlier era. These are all properties alluring to secret services, who will therefore gravitate towards the illegal drug trade unless detained by compelling bureaucratic or ideological considerations.

The first half of "Drugs, Guns and the CIA" clarifies long-held allegations about CIA involvement in opium and heroin trafficking in south-east Asia, amplifying and hardening the pioneering work done in this area by Al McCoy in his book *The Politics of Heroin in South East Asia.* The mathematics of the CIA's "secret war" in Laos are compelling. (A "secret war", remember, is a US martial enterprise known to everyone, but for reasons of tact kept from the American newspaper-reading and TV-watching public.) By 1970 the Pentagon's contribution to the war in Laos was running at $146 million, but the same secret document furnishing that figure also noted that the CIA was spending up to $60 million more than its official appropriation. Thus the question put to Victor Marchetti, who as a CIA officer helped assemble the Agency's official budget:

Q: "Is it conceivable the CIA would fight a war with dope money?"

Marchetti: "Well, yes, in the sense that they would not sell dope to earn money to support an operation, but they would look the other way if the people they were supporting were financing themselves by selling dope."

This "looking the other way" included the provision to the CIA's client Vang Pao of an airline (Xieng Kouang, aka Air Opium) to ship opium from Long Chen, in Laos, to sites further south. The airline was entirely controlled by the CIA. As former AID official Ron Rickenbach says, "I was in the areas where opium was transhipped; I personally was a witness to opium being placed on aircraft, American aircraft; I witnessed it being taken off smaller aircraft that were coming in from outlying sites."

Part of the aftermath is supplied by the legendary CIA officer Tony Poe, who was the prototype for the Brando character in *Apocalypse Now.* Poe lives in Thailand and has hitherto kept his mouth firmly shut. He describes how Vang Pao would load up a DC3 with heroin: "They were flying it in a big wet-wing airplane that could fly for

Noriega's former sidekick says Noriega told him gleefully, "I have Bush by the balls". The problem for Bush is that the historical record suggests an intimate relationship between drugs smugglers and US covert operations

13 hours, a DC3, and all the wings were filled with gas. They fly down to Pakse, and then they fly over to Danang, and then the number two guy to President Thieu would receive it."

By the end of 1970 there were 30,000 Americans in Vietnam addicted to heroin, and President Nixon asked the CIA to get involved in limiting the drug traffic. In 1972 a US intelligence agent in south-east Asia sent a secret field report to Customs, suggesting a serious conflict of interest: "It was ironic," the agent wrote, "that the CIA should be given the responsibility of narcotics intelligence, particularly since they were supporting the prime movers. Even though the CIA was, in fact, facilitating the movement of opiates to the US, they steadfastly hid behind the shield of secrecy and said that all was done in the interest of national security."

Among those who began to realise the moral perspectives of what was going on was Rickenbach who finally woke up to "the rather horrible implications of what we were doing" and stopped working for the government.

From Laos to Honduras

By this time, in the wake of Watergate, the CIA had allowed Artime and his network to go to an independent, consultative status, and Milian-Rodriguez was now working for the Medellin cartel, supervising the washing and investing of $200 million a month, with a total capital fund of $11 billion. At the time of his arrest in 1983 he was carrying $5 million, a fact which brought Vice President George Bush to pose with what the money launderer called his "petty cash". In "Drugs, Guns and the CIA" he is asked:

Q: "How much money was actually contributed by you or through you to the contras, total?"

Milian-Rodriguez: "It was a little under ten million dollars . . . It was delivered on a per need basis."

Exactly as in Laos, the drug money filled the funding gap. The documentary then turns to Noriega's former aide José Blandon:

Q: "When General Noriega told you Felix Rodriguez (a Cuban exile and CIA agent allegedly involved in the capture and murder of Che Guevara) was friendly with Ramon Milian-Rodriguez, were you surprised to hear that Felix Rodriguez would be involved with a drug trafficker?"

Blandon: "Surprised? Why?"

According to Blandon, while Felix Rodriguez was supplying the contras from Ilopango base in El Salvador he was getting arms shipments with the help of Mike Harari, the former Israel intelligence agent and key aide to Noriega.

Then, once again some problems for the Vice President.

Q: " Who was Felix Rodriguez working for, or with, when he approached you?"

Milian-Rodriguez: "Well, the only government mention he made was Vice President Bush."

Q: "And what was his relationship with Bush as you understood it?"

Milian-Rodriguez: "he was reporting directly to Bush. I was led to believe he was reporting regularly to the Vice President . . . The request for the contribution [i.e. drug dollars from the cartel to the contras] made a lot more sense *because* Felix was reporting to George Bush. If Felix had come to me and said I'm reporting to anyone else, let's say, you know, Oliver North, I might have been more sceptical. I didn't know who Oliver North was and I didn't know his background. But you know, if you have a . . . let's say we'll call him an ex-CIA operative, even though it's not true you know, he's a current operative . . . "

Q: "Who is?"

Milian-Rodriguez: "Felix . . . Yeah, there's nothing ex about him. But if you have a CIA, what you consider to be a CIA man coming to you saying 'I want to fight this war, we're out of funds, can you help us out. I'm reporting directly to Bush on it', I mean it's very believable . . . Here you have a CIA guy reporting to his old boss."

In fact Felix Rodriguez's relationship with Bush goes back to when Bush was CIA director in the mid-1970s. A February 1985 memo from General Paul Gormon, said that Rodriguez "is operating as a private citizen", but his acquaintanceship with the Vice President is real enough, going back to the latter's days as Director of Central Intelligence. During the 1980 campaign Felix Rodriguez was in contact with Bush, who was particularly active in his campaigns in southern Florida, both in the primary race against Reagan and in the election battle with Carter. As is well known, the first call Rodriguez made after Eugene Hassenfus was shot down on a contra supply flight in October 1986, was to a staffer of Vice President Bush, whose office subsequently admitted to seventeen meetings with Rodriguez including three between the latter and the Vice President himself.

Right now election considerations are prompting an escalation in the "war" on drugs. After twenty years' of resistance, the California state assembly is giving way on a bill allowing the police to tap telephones, supposedly confined to drug investigations. The US congress is giving the military vast new powers of interception, surveillance and seizure in civilian areas. The US customs service can now find, or plant a few marijuana seeds and confiscate a car or a boat. Meanwhile the US government is experiencing humiliating defeat at the hands of the drug smuggler and military strongman in Panama they have been paying for years. For the Vice President to say he was ignorant of such goings on is to say — as the documentary demonstrates — he has been in a coma for the last 20 years. How otherwise could he have been unaware of such an important component of the US government's relationship with the rest of the world?

Urgent call for Dr Freud

"For seven and a half years I've worked alongside him, and I'm proud to be his partner. We've had triumphs, we've made mistakes, we've had sex."

This was George Bush describing his relationship with President Reagan, at the College of Southern Idaho on May 6. As the audience roared, Bush quickly corrected himself: "Setbacks, we've had setbacks." Bush then amplified the motions of his own unconscious by adding with a little smile, "I feel like the javelin competitor who won the toss and elected to receive." □

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Don Quixote's shield-bearer

The Mexican novelist CARLOS FUENTES has just been awarded Spain's most prestigious literary prize.* MIRON GRINDEA *managed to grab him after the presentation ceremony to talk about nudity and Milan Kundera, the problem with words, the ruin of the world . . .

POST-FRANCO SPAIN boasts more than 50 literary prizes. Ranging from £1,500 to £50,000 they're awarded each year for poetry, novellas, short stories, novels (some prizes specifying "on erotic themes") and essays. Two Barcelona publishers, Planeta and Nadal, offer annual prizes of ten million pesetas (£50,000) each for a work of fiction — but the most prestigious award is the Premio Cervantes (also £50,000), rightly considered to be Spain's equivalent of the Nobel prize. Since its foundation in 1979, recipients have includes Borges (outrageously by passed by Stockholm for too long), Octavio Paz, Rafael Alberti and, this year, Carlos Fuentes, Mexico's implacable exponent of the "universal communicability of fiction".

The presentation ceremony that I attended last month, at the 15th-century University Alcala de Henares, birthplace of Cervantes, had rather more panache than the sober proceedings of the Swedish Academy: a glittering wealth of academic robes, impassioned sounds of ancient guitars (*bandurrias*), the infectious buzzing of a Mediterranean audience.

The acceptance speech began with an emotional affirmation of the role that Spanish is expected to play on both sides of the Atlantic. "Nineteen Ninety Two," proclaimed Fuentes, "the Fifth centenary year celebrating the discovery of the New World, may prove the last opportunity to attain the spiritual solidarity between Spain and Hispanic America. The approaching Millenium should establish Spanish not only as the dominant language of the three Americas — North, Central and South — but possibly as the world's second language . . . In the 21st century, people will speak Spanish."

Mexican by will

Born in Panama in 1928, educated in English schools in Rio, Buenos Aires and Montevideo as his diplomat father shifted from one posting to another, Fuentes might not be the most obvious advocate of the Spanish language. But no sooner did the teenager return to his ancestral roots than he realised that "there was something to be expressed in Spanish that could not be said otherwise". Hence the extraordinary blossoming of this "Mexican by will and by imagination" into one of the most influential Latin American minds. "I saw things, perhaps because I'd been abroad for so long, that other writers of my generation could not see: for instance, that the ancient gods were living in the basements of Mexico City, trying to get out through the elevator shafts. I could *see* that."

Though offered important appointments in the Mexican government, the young man of the world turned them down to devote his time and energy to writing. He had already realised that the English language didn't need one more writer, but that the Spanish language did (also, as he says: "I make love in Spanish and insult in Spanish; which makes me a Spanish-speaking writer"). The result was a first novel with the sarcastic title *La región más transparente* (*Where the Air is Clear*, 1958), a bold exploration through the theme of human sacrifice of the links between pre-revolutionary Mexico and its haunting Aztec past. This *escandalosa novela* found its detractors, including the novelist Elena Garro, first wife of Fuentes' mentor Octavio Paz. The young author admitted that, amidst verbal exaltation and contortions of narrative, he had been trying to express as brutally as he could his love-hate relationship with Mexico City ("the most masochistic city in the world"). He had endeavoured to produce a synthesis of present-day Mexico with its conflicts, aspirations and rancours, a testimony to its life rediscovered by the imagination. The characters were cardboard cut-outs of the International Set: "How could a newly arrived bourgeoisie," Fuentes asked, "be human?"

> *"The ancient gods were living in the basements of Mexico City, trying to get out through the elevator shafts. I could see that"*

While embarking on this work, the author had promised himself never to lie. "And ever since I did my utmost to live within that promise." His controversial novel — "enlightening in its chaos, unbelievable in its historical background", as one of the kinder reviews described it — was soon credited with starting the "boom" in modern Latin American fiction. *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), partly inspired by *Citizen Kane*, depicted the corruption of Mexico's revolutionary ideas and established Fuentes' international reputation.

During the fragments of conversation that I succeeded in having with Fuentes last month — at the private view of the fascinating "bio-bibliographical" exhibition organised in his honour at the National Library, in the courtyard of Alcala and at the Royal Palace when he was not conversing with royalty or persistent groups of lionising fans — what I found most impressive was his often-repeated belief in the power of world literature. He is continually worried about the erosion of language; implicity, about the ruin of the world. "The world is full of good stories that haven't been told yet. The novel is hardly dead. Ours is one of the most glorious periods in the history of the novel. One can talk now of the geography of the novel, which is a worldwide geography. We've got Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetze in South Africa, Günter Grass, Juan Goytisolo, Philip Roth, the Latin Americans . . ."

Scheherazade

One of Fuentes' proudest metaphors is *America Latina es una novela*. By *mexicanidad* (mexicanness) he means the task ahead of his fellow-writers. He is keen on making his point clear. "Beyond the knowledge of science, logic and politics there is the knowledge we call imagination; and it is only achieved through a verbal structure we call a poem or a novel." Without coquetishness he likes to compare himself to Scheherazade: in order not to die, he tries his hardest to respect his daily appointment with his typewriter; it means that he has lived another day . . . .

"Living with Mexico", as a character in his novel *The Old Gringo* calls it, is what Fuentes himself does: six months of the year teaching literature at Harvard or other universities, the other six in Mexico City. He made an exception in 1987 when he held the Simon Bolivar Chair at Cambridge for a whole year. "The writer has to speak for the silent," he insists. "The problem of being a Spanish colony is that we have been silent for 400 years. We imitated Europe because we had no consciousness of our own. This explains why the real historians in Latin America are the novelists."

Yet another problem: because Spanish was the imposed language of the Conquistadores, Latin American writers "keep on re-inventing and developing the language to make it their own. This is what a Borges or Paz did". Fuentes believes that Joyce shared a similar attitude towards the English language. When reading *Ulysses*, he discovered that he had been a Joycean before reading Joyce, that Joyce "was a writer who was in the air for the people of my generation".

Fuentes himself likes "to read" in his head anywhere, preferably while walking on the beach, in the mountains, along the polluted streets of Mexico City. Doing this he can defeat the succession of words: "Words coexist in great cataracts until one reaches the agonising stage of having to find the *mot juste*". There follows "the despairing discrepancy between the magical totality of images, sounds, smells," Fuentes growls, "and the final stage when you sit down to write, only words, words, words, when the perfection of the imagination is rendered imperfect. That is the Calvary." Gide experienced a similar horror of the mechanics of novel-writing.

However, the imaginative conception is less difficult for Fuentes than the heartbreaking process of revision. He makes an interesting point: "I'd rather give the reader something that he will *have* to continue." Another striking metaphor is his division of writers into two categories: those whose works are like the sculptor Giacometti's, made of air, and those which relate to Bernini's. He considers himself a Bernini type: "I let every-

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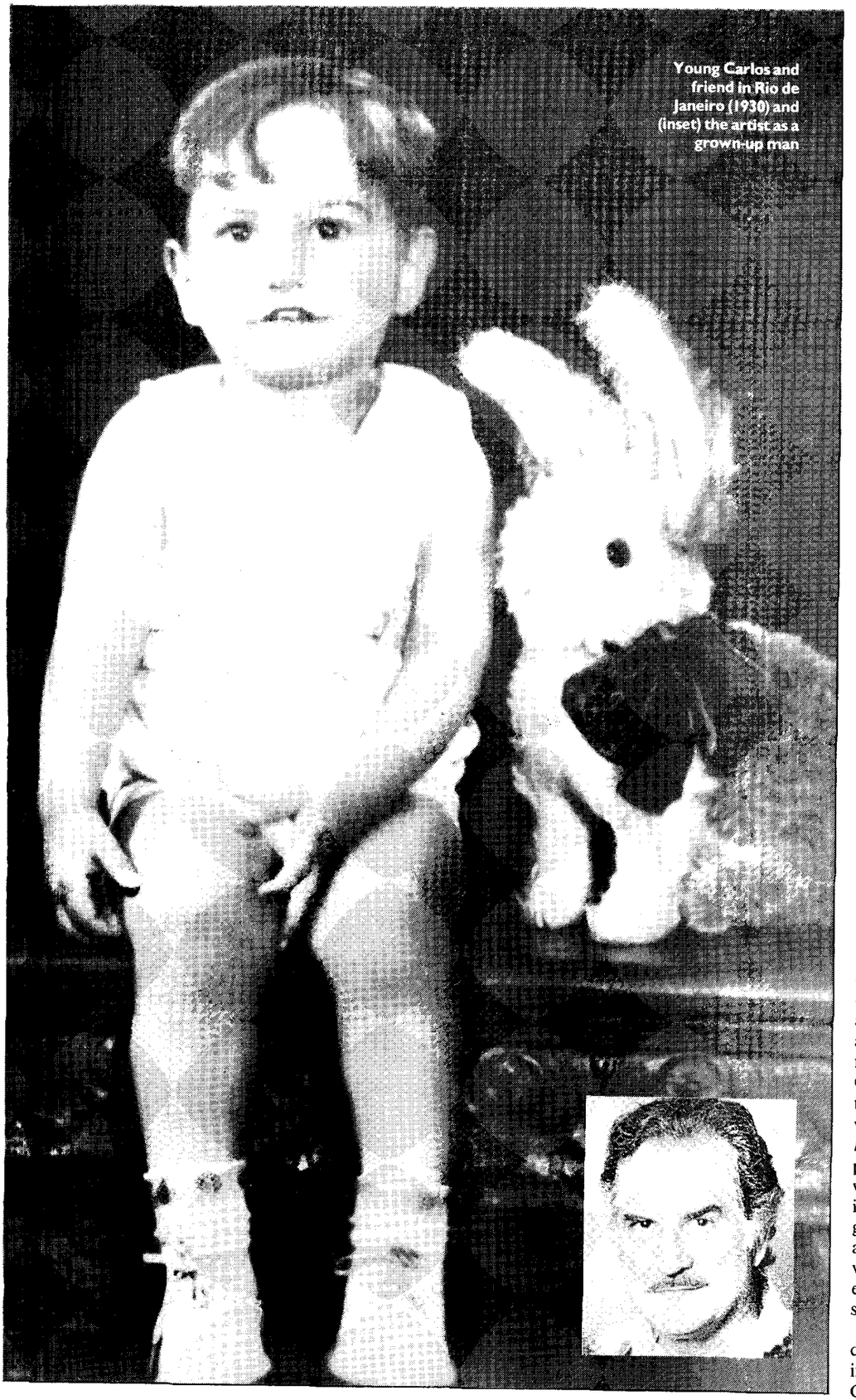

Young Carlos and friend in Rio de Janeiro (1930) and (inset) the artist as a grown-up man

thing rush through me and over me as if under the Niagara Falls; but then I have to bear the consequences." He quotes his friend, Milan Kundera, for whom the novel is "a kind of paradise where everybody has the right to be heard". A kind of democracy which every author *ought* to champion. "I must hear those voices, I *need* those voices," he says.

His first encounter with Kundera has a Rabelaisian charm, and he enjoys telling it. "The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia took place in 1968. Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre went there in September, followed by Günter Grass in October. Garcia Marquez and I reached Prague — the most beautiful city in the world — in December, determined to talk in public against any foreign intervention: a topic every Latin American knows only too well. Kundera's greetings were: 'The country is bugged everywhere; the only place where we can talk is a sauna by the river.' We sat there naked, listening to his harrowing tale. After an hour of steam we asked Milan if we could have a shower, but he just said, 'Follow me,' and took us to the frozen Moldava. He looked carefully for a sizeable crack in the ice. There was one. He pushed us into the icy river and kept telling us what was going on in Prague. What an unexpected way, Garcia and I thought, of dying in the land of Kafka."

Back to the mission of Latin American writers. Paz, in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, talked of the Mexican people as "contemporaries of mankind". Fuentes completes the idea: "Contemporaries through the *word*. The whole of Latin America is a polyculture with the past hidden alongside the façade of progress. Fortunately it is still possible to choose from a plurality of values in order to construct a better human society." And once again, he quotes Paz: "We are resolved to invent our own reality, and we'll attain this through a literature of foundations."

Fuentes who, in 1961, was denied entry to the United States under the 1952 McCarren-Walter Act, remains an outspoken and influential critic of US foreign policy in Latin America. In his latest book of essays, *Myself With Others**, he has included the full text of a Commencement Speech he delivered at Harvard in 1983. He ardently pleaded with the Washington establishment to give up for ever "the practice of negative overlordship and join instead the forces of change and patience and identity in Latin America". He hasn't changed his position in 1988. "The US course," he reiterates, "is a short-sleeve policy which leads to nothing. The Inter-American system is violating treaties and laws. What is worse, it violates America's own laws. The USA must leave behind all its anachronisms, such as the ones represented by Reagan and Colonel North. Only by applying this long-expected surgery will the USA be able to propagate and establish a policy leading to a multi-polaric world."

Spaniards would never give up gladly the ritual of dining between 10 p.m. and the prolonged hours of the morning. Following the champagne feast offered by the Royal Palace every year after the awarding of the Premio Cervantes, I was taken by a group of avant-garde writers, first to a humble restaurant called after the epic hero Amadis de Gaula, so delightfully satyrised by Cervantes, then to *El Horno de la Aguella* (Granny's Grill) where I was forced to enjoy the house speciality *Las morcillas de alla:* a sort of salami seasoned with pig's blood. For nearly four hours the main topics were a reappraisal of Robbe-Grillet's belated influence on Spanish modern fiction, a not very generous commentary on "popular" authors such as . . . Fuentes, and finally a mildly innebriatic vote of thanks by the latest winner of a prize, ending with: "Let's drink to the feat of not having said a single nasty word about our fellow-writers."

The following day the streets of Madrid were decorated with hundreds of book stalls, celebrating the *Feria de Libro*. This is always held on St Georges Day which, like Shakespeare's birthday, is also the national birthday of Cervantes. Carlos Fuentes, whose oration on the previous day was largely a tribute to the creator of the modern novel, had ended with these words: "I wish I could be described in my passport with nothing else but this: 'Profession: *Escritor, es decir escudero de Don Quijote*.'" Or, "Writer, which is to say Don Quixote's shield-bearer".

**"Myself With Others" will be published next week by Deutsch at £12.95.*

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Books

Political gets too personal

Last week we questioned the simplifications of **ANDREA DWORKIN's** *exclusive, passionate feminism. Now novelist* **MICHAEL MOORCOCK,** *in reply, questions the left's refusal to hear her*

UNTIL THE PUBLICATION of *Intercourse* (Arrow, £3.50) last year, most of the left considered Andrea Dworkin a respectably radical feminist; sometimes a little extreme in certain areas, solidly on the side of reform, her books accepted cornerstones of modern feminism. *Our Blood, Right-Wing Women* and *Pornography* continued the work of Millett, Firestone and Mitchell, providing us with fresh political ideas, deeper understanding of the fundamental issues, a new hope for sexual equality.

Intercourse, it seems, went too far. Dworkin suggested the political might be altogether too personal. "Traditional" sexuality might have something to do with sexual inequality, she thought.

And there was an outcry, not just from the predictable sources: the plummy El Vino socialists and nervous Chestertonoids, the right-wing women journalists whom one suspects of having been rugger groupies in their youth, the hearties of the *Literary Review*, which seems to be the book world's answer to the *Sun*. The left joined in too, devoting, in this country and in the USA, enormous amounts of space condemning Dworkin's proposal that the politics of inequality were reflected in, and maintained by, the way we approach the sexual act itself.

In Minneapolis, the Dworkin/MacKinnon Bill had been passed and for a short while a city law accepted that pornography, as defined by the Bill, could be a direct as well as indirect cause of sexual crime and sex discrimination. Had not the mayor vetoed it twice, the Bill would have allowed anyone harmed by pornography to bring a case against the pornographer on the basis that pornography contravened their civil rights as citizens. This legislation would have taken the debate away from an obscenity issue to a sex equality issue and made redundant repressive legislation like our own Obscene Publications Act, thus dismantling at least some of the machinery of state censorship.

This radical and clear-sighted approach to pornography as a civil rights issue was attacked by many organisations, including the well-known "*Playboy* lobby", employing ACLU lawyers. The city of Indianapolis was actually sued for passing the Bill. As Dworkin remarks in *Letters from a War Zone* (reviewed *NS* 20 May):

> [Feminists] are the ones with different ideas, political ideas, subversive ideas. Yet the energy of the civil liberties lawyers as well as the pornographers . . . has gone into shutting us up. Their argument is that when we address male sexual hegemony as expressed in and perpetuated by pornography . . . we are endangering the speech of others.

The attacks continued, especially from *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Hustler*, who began to spend fortunes in attempts to discredit radical feminists in general and Dworkin in particular. This at least was understandable. What's presently baffling me is hearing the left condemn Dworkin as a right-wing pro-censorship activist and criticising her works from that perspective. It is from the left and her traditional allies that she has begun to receive her most savage attacks. Few have read the Dworkin/MacKinnon Bill; few have read the published evidence of the Minneapolis Hearings, *Pornography and Sexual Violence* (Everywoman, £4.95); few have read Dworkin herself on the subject. Reports, frequently from people describing themselves as feminists, referred to her efforts to "ban" porn and represented her as a misanthropic "anti-obscenity" biological determinist when the truth is very much the opposite.

"With pornography we're talking about the Left defending commodity capitalism in all of its forms so that when you defend free speech, what it means in this country is that you're defending the right of people who have money, who have been able to buy speech, over the rights of people who have been disenfranchised from the system," Dworkin said in a recent interview in *On The Issues*.

Dworkin says her books are not prescriptive but descriptive. While continuing to expand the boundaries of feminist dialectic, she argues from a humanistic and idealistic perspective both intellectually stunning and stylistically eloquent. In her reluctance to remain within the defensive walls of accepted liberal wisdom she shares something with Orwell, who so angered the left with his own refusal to repeat the comforting reassurances of conventional socialist thinking. She attacks male supremacy, male injustice, male cruelty, but she has no belief in any biologically inherited wickedness. Her own father was loving and tender and it shocked her to find that not all men were like him. She still believes that most men could be both just and sensitive, that men and women are socialised into their roles and that legal reform and enlightened education together can change society,

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ridding us of inequality, providing genuine liberation for women and, incidentally, for men. All her arguments are founded in this belief.

In *Intercourse*, she devotes much of the book to discussions of male writers she admires. In *Letters from a War Zone*, she says where she has benefitted from identifying with male writers. What she fights against, in everything she writes and does, is male refusal to acknowledge sexual inequality, male hatred of women, male contempt for women, male power. And it is when she addresses these issues that she is impressive in her anger, her articulation, her perceptions. Gloria Steinem has referred to Dworkin as the women's movement's Old Testament prophet. But Dworkin is more than a visionary; she is an analyst, a polemicist, a political force whose influence on the politics of liberation many radicals already acknowledge as seminal. Moreover, Dworkin is not an ivory-tower feminist; she remains an active speaker and organiser throughout the West and a powerful voice for working-class women:

> Pornography is an issue that has mobilised poor women; the kind of women who have been in pornography or prostitution, the women who have been incest victims or homeless. Women . . . who make the $60,000 a year also control the media in the Women's Movement. They are the ones who are saying "Shut up, we really don't want the stigma of this issue on us." Whereas the poor women are saying, we have no escape from the impact of what pornography means in our lives. It's a real rich/poor issue.

Perhaps this is why Dworkin has lately become such an object of hatred to the middle-class left. Certainly it continues to misrepresent her to an astonishing degree, discussing her anti-pornography campaigning as an issue of censorship rather than an issue of civil rights and seeing her as attacking female sexuality, when in fact she is passionate in her vision of a world in which human sensuality is not only heightened but qualitatively improved by changes in the way we perceive and experience it:

> It's amazing to me how little attraction the word "equality" really has for people. How they so deeply get their pleasure from forms of inequality of all kinds. It seems to me that if a society had real equality, the forms of sensuality that would exist between people would be deeper and richer and more various, less fetishized and alienated.

Scarcely the words of a puritan. But then Dworkin is only puritanical in the zeal with which she is currently keeping the flame of radical feminism alive.

These are bad times for social reform. In the present economic and social climate, allies are deserting the left on almost every issue. Surely the few of us with the courage and capacity to fight on should be supported not condemned? It would seem that the least we could do is to read and understand such writers, before allowing ourselves to be talked into passivity by interests currently using the debased slogans of an earlier liberalism to ensure their own commercial security. Dworkin is not the first genuine radical to be pilloried by the left. Neither would she be the first free spirit to be silenced in the name of free speech. □

Michael Moorcock's next novel, "Mother London", will be published by Secker on 20 June.

Not *another* book about collectibles! But read on past Louis K. Meisel's preface to THE BIZARRE AFFAIR (Thames & Hudson, £12.95) — about his wife's "terrific eye on a purely aesthetic level" and the "astute and visionary" person who got him collecting Clarice Cliff — for this is not the history of a fashionable, trained designer, but the splendidly illustrated account of a working-class girl who started work in the potteries at the age of 13 and whose talent as a designer was spotted in the painting shops and backed by a director. Hand-painted "Bizarre Ware" was devised by Clarice Cliff in 1928 to shift a huge unsold stock of old pottery shapes. For a whole decade through the Great Depression it kept up to 60 Bizarre Girls, as they called themselves, at work — until it was finally killed off by changing fashions and, ultimately, the government Utility Scheme, the first imposition of sumptuary law in 300 years and a product of 1930s modernism. All decoration, hand-painted or not, was prohibited — only plain, white utility ware could be made. (Jules Lubbock)

Breaking the nuclear silence

Martin Ince

The Chernobyl Disaster
VIKTOR HAYNES and MARKO BOJCUN *Hogarth* £7.95
Chernobyl: The Final Warning
ROBERT PETER GALE and THOMAS HAUSER *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95
Britain's Nuclear Nightmare
JAMES CUTLER and ROB EDWARDS *Sphere* £3.99

LIKE ANY SELF-RESPECTING anniversary, two years of Chernobyl means business for astute authors and their publishers. The first two of these books are among the best of the current Chernobyl vintage: each has a unique angle on the disaster and its long-term effects, especially within the USSR itself. The third tells the story of the Britain's own nuclear perils and makes it clear that big risks now being taken here may mean that we are already suffering a creeping Chernobyl of our own.

The most original of these books is **The Chernobyl Disaster** by Haynes and Bojcun. The authors read Ukranian, the language of the local press in the Chernobyl area, as well as Russian, and have assembled as complete an account as we are likely to get of the sequence of events leading up to the accident and what happened next. They find that the wrecked reactor is merely the outward sign of a social system utterly incapable of coping with nuclear power. The machine's design was flawed (although others like it remain in use), but the real causes of the accident range from strong production pressures on individual power station operators to the Soviet state's need for a quick supply of cheap power — in one of the least energy-efficient countries in the world. Telescoped construction programmes, defective materials and massive unresolved technical problems meant — according to accounts in the Ukrainian press — that Chernobyl was an accident waiting to happen from the day it first produced electricity.

The Soviet leadership's desire for a rapid expansion of nuclear power — despite its proven risks and uncertain economic benefits — means in Haynes and Bojcun's view that the Gorbachev leadership cannot use Chernobyl as a weapon to increase openness and democracy in the USSR. Just as the West had to find out about the disaster from its own radiation monitoring systems, the people of the Chernobyl area, especially the residents of the nearby town of Pripyat, were warned far too late to prevent heavy casualties, although it is known that the Kremlin had details of the accident almost at once. In the longer term, the economic pressures forcing the USSR to go nuclear are powerful and will not go away.

But the strong reaction to Chernobyl in Ukrainian public opinion and among Soviet writers and intellectuals does give Haynes and Bojcun some hope. Articles have started to appear in the Soviet press on the possibilities of wind and solar energy, technologies which have so far been all but ignored by Soviet planners. News has even emerged of at least one nuclear power station cancellation in the USSR — probably the first ever and certainly the first to be made public.

However, the massive list of things the Soviet authorities have still not told the world about the disaster makes it clear just how little effect *glasnost* has so far had on the workings of the Soviet nuclear industry. There has never been a full list of

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casualties, even among the Chernobyl power station workers: there are no details of the evacuation carried out in the area (different versions say that either 71 or 179 villages were cleared); and most Soviet citizens have no access to the Soviet government's report on the accident to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Anyone in Britain can order it at the public library.

This gloom is scarcely lifted by Gale and Hauser's **Chernobyl: The Final Warning**, which consists partly of an account of Gale's work with Chernobyl cancer victims and partly of a much less interesting account of his views on nuclear power in general. Gale is the Los Angeles bone marrow medic flown to the USSR after the Chernobyl disaster at the behest of East-West trade expert Armand Hammer. His work there — a series of life-saving operations on people contaminated by the accident — is fascinating, while such parts of the book as his observation that anyone in the world could inhale a plutonium particle from Chernobyl tomorrow and die of the resulting cancer are striking. But the book is grossly overwritten — the material in it would have made a reasonable feature article — and his view that nuclear power is not a worthwhile risk may be correct, but has been argued more convincingly by a wealth of other authors.

However, it's probably unwise for anyone in Britain to come down too hard on Gale. If Cutler and Edwards are right in **Britain's Nuclear Nightmare**, you never know when you might need him. They look at the whole British nuclear industry, military and civil, and conclude that nuclear accidents and everyday nuclear emissions to land, sea and air are causing a steady but ill-recorded stream of cancer deaths. Sellafield, already the bad news capital of Britain, is the chief villain. But atom bomb factories, submarine bases, nuclear power stations and the Dounreay fast reactor centre in Caithness are also fingered as major polluters.

The nuclear industry can be guaranteed to dispute all this, especially the detailed arithmetic on cancer clusters near nuclear sites. But there is evidence that the British nuclear industry can no longer guarantee the public support — and money — it needs for its schemes. The planned expansion of Dounreay, which Cutler and Edwards fear will become a major international polluter, may not happen because of a change of mind by Britain's European partners in the project. Privatisation may threaten future nuclear power station plans. And sheer economics bodes ill for Sellafield. It could be the objectors who finally find themselves pushing on an open door, after 40 years in which the nuclear industry, no less secretive here than in Moscow, has called the shots. If Cutler and Edwards are right, it won't be a moment too soon. □

Martin Ince is a contributor to "Blowing in the Wind: Politics After Chernobyl", ed. Louis Mackay and Mark Thompson, just published by Pluto at £7.95

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Whirling around in whorls

Pat Coyne

Chaos: Making a New Science
JAMES GLEICK *Heinemann* £12.95

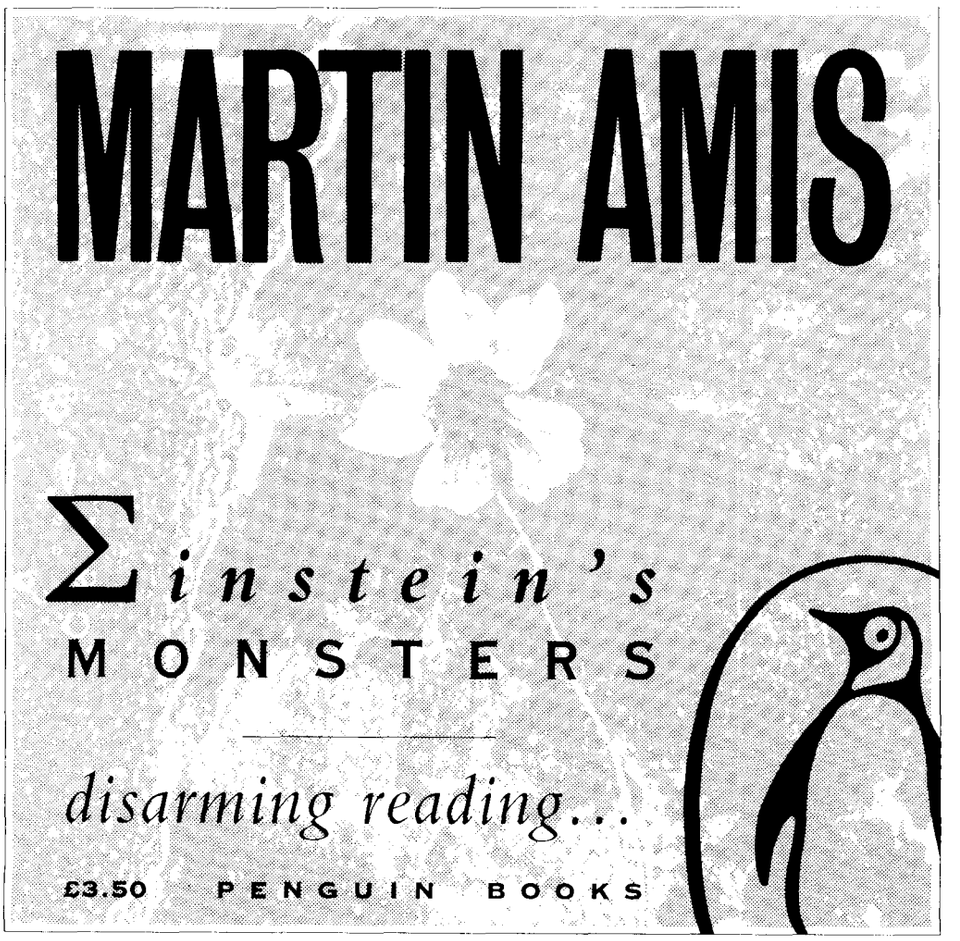
ODD HOW THE VOCABULARY of a newly credulous age seems to be invading even the best guarded of territories. Who would have thought that the words "catastrophe" and "chaos" could have become part of the common currency of that most self-consciously rational of disciplines, mathematics? Perhaps there is more to come? Could other current American predelictions, like the musings of Nostradamus, be quantified, codified and find themselves in the textbooks?

Don't rule it out. James Gleick's book is an object lesson in how, beneath the best explored of surfaces, there can lurk not the occult but — much worse, as far as science is concerned — the unpredictable. Moreover we are not talking of some obscure branch of algebra. Gleick's claims for the mathematics of chaos resemble those of Douglas Adams for the number 42. "Life, the Universe and everything" is there as Gleick asserts that chaos sheds light on stock markets, heart attacks, earthquakes, the rise and fall of animal populations, the mechanics of star clusters and much, much more.

From where does chaos spring? In a phrase: from non-linear equations. Gleick rightly identifies the tendency among scientists to try and reduce everything to the linear — i.e. formulae without awkward exponents such as x^2 or x^3 — which even a computer can solve. They share too an almost religious belief that in the real universe the natural state is equilibrium. Left to themselves things will more or less stay where they are.

On the whole, science has done pretty well by both tenets, but, as ever, complacency sets in and there is a tendency to think that they are universally applicable. Just as a (very) little thing like the precession of the orbit of Mercury (43 seconds of arc a century for anyone interested) prompted Einstein to formulate the theory of General Relativity, so seemingly trivial problems in apparently unrelated disciplines have stimulated the development of revolutionary techniques.

Take, for example, weather forecasting. It is commonplace that forecasts are accurate for, at best, no more than a few days, but until recently the general view has been that this is due to the complexity of the problem and the huge number of variables involved. Given a big enough computer and sufficient good data, ran the argument, accurate longer-range forecasts should be possible. Maybe not. As long ago as 1963, Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, had developed a very simple model of the atmosphere comprising no more than a dozen non-linear equations (compared to hundreds of the linear variety in conventional models), which seemed to mimic in essential details



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the behaviour of the weather. But the most intriguing aspect was the model's extraordinary sensitivity to its initial conditions. A difference in the fourth or fifth decimal point, of say a temperature fed into it, would lead to wildly different predictions for weather only days ahead. Mocking the scientific faith in equilibrium, it seemed that the tiniest cause could have massive effects. "It was as if," said one mathematician, "the flap of a butterfly's wing in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas."

Little notice was taken of Lorenz for 15 years until suddenly, in the late 1970s, a whole host of problems started yielding to the techniques he had pioneered. The seemingly random fluctuations of fish numbers in a pond, the shape of snowflakes, the spread of epidemics, the movement of cotton prices over a century, the deadly propensity of the human heart to go into fibrillation rather than maintain a steady beat: all turned out to have aspects in common. That common factor was chaos; the potential to go suddenly from seeming equilibrium to wild fluctuation. Yet that chaos contained a curious sort of order.

Pictured graphically, the solutions to the chaotic equations resembled whorls, never repeating themselves but seemingly centred around a point or points, dubbed finally "strange attractors". In solving them, the mathematicians had to resort to techniques which had been regarded as the purest of pure mathematics. Fractional dimensions, for example, turned out to have physical meaning. Fractional dimensions? They lie between the point (1) and the line (2) or between the line and the three-dimensional solid. What, for example, are the dimensions of a ball of string? The two dimensions of the (linear) string or the three of the ball? Mathematically, the answer turns out to be somewhere in between.

One result of these researches has been the generation of the Mandelbrot set. Arguably the most complex as well as the most beautiful object in mathematics, its infinitely detailed whorling shapes contain forms of size down to the sub-sub-microscopic, never repeating, yet revealing ever more variations on the basic shape. The Mandelbrot set has become a public emblem of chaos, featuring on book covers, brochures and even spawning a travelling exhibition of its own.

So does Gleick bring order to chaos? Up to a point. A certain breathlessness infects his prose:

> A picture of reality built up over the years in Benoit Mandelbrot's mind. In 1960 it was a ghost of an idea, a faint unfocused image. But Mandelbrot recognised it when he saw it and there it was on the blackboard of Hendrik Houthakker's office.

One puts it down to the baleful influence of the *New York Times*, for which he works. He gives, too, the impression of not quite understanding a lot of what he describes, though, to be fair, the same could be said of a good few scientists in the field. On the plus side he has talked to virtually everybody of note on the subject and makes a very creditable attempt at rendering it intelligible to the lay person. One thing missing is a sense of irony. Just 60 years ago the search for the causes of atomic spectra ended with quantum mechanics and the abandoning of causality, so now the quest for more predictable weather forecasts leads to chaos. Disorder and unpredicability, it seems, lie at the heart of things. □

'Til death us do reunite

Roz Kaveney

The Monument
T. BEHRENS *Cape* £11.95

BIOGRAPHY HAS ITS ROOTS in the offering of moral examples. In biographies of those who never did anything distinguished but who, their biographer feels, lived life with an exemplary energy, we need to know the good faith and moral credentials of the person trying to convince us that all this is actually important.

One way to do this is direct and obvious — it is to make the subject of the book not only its overt protagonist, but also the author's decision to *write* it and the mechanism of its composition. Another is to show how the friendship which has produced this pious testimony is typical, as was the subject, of an admirable milieu. Neither of these descriptions applies to T. Behrens' biography of his brother and of his sister-in-law but, in the end, and indirectly, we learn much of the set of values which he takes for granted. Perhaps too much.

This is a book about two people who believed themselves to be saints of romantic love and went around humming the *Liebestod*, not especially under their breaths. No one seems ever to have discussed with them the traditional, let alone the recent and radical, critiques of this behaviour, and they were far too busy gazing into their reflections in each other's eyes to have noticed if anyone had.

Justin and Ursula Behrens seem on the face of it to have been persons of talent and some taste — not even the hushed, hagiographical tone of their kinsman can hide that — who were prevented from getting anything very much done not so much by their dangerous uxoriousness as by their small private incomes. Had they had, after their marriage, to work for a living, the journals of their travels might have been knocked into shape, the fragments of fiction finished off, for publication. Justin's photography and Ursula's connoisseurship would have had to have been turned to practical use. Their love did not sap their considerable energy, but it turned it away from work and into make-work.

Ursula was a refugee Hungarian gentlewoman and a compulsive maker of myths about herself. This is not to convict her of regular untruth, but to say that the manner in which she told extravagant stories of hairbreadth escapes was not such as to inspire confidence, that the world-historical importance she attached to private griefs was not always justified. And she was a myth-maker whose egoism lacked a redeeming spice of irony.

When they met, Justin was an adolescent casting about for full-time occupation; devotion to the self-centred offered him that for life.

The trouble with living for love is that sooner or later you feel you have to die for it. Ursula eventually got sexually bored with Justin, talked herself into an affair with an unfortunate Sudanese police chief and, after writing a quick novella about it, killed herself in remorse and to give herself an ending. Justin wandered around for a year or so, embedded her novella in an unpublished memorial essay and went back to the Sudan to kill himself. They are, of course, buried in the same grave: Two Lovers Built This Nest. What the unfortunate Sudanese police chief thought about the whole thing we are not informed. All of this would be touching, bizarre and a warning to us all had it happened in the 1930s, but the deaths of Justin and Ursula happened within the last decade, after feminism, after postmodernism, after punk. The problem with the book is that it tries to elevate to the status of timelessness a love affair so interesting because so time-warped. □

Trousers in the Sahara

Sara Maitland

Isabelle: The Life of Isabelle Eberhardt
ANNETTE KOBAK *Chatto* £15
Vagabond
ISABELLE EBERHARDT trans. ANNETTE KOBAK
Hogarth £4.95

ISABELLE EBERHARDT was born in 1877, the illegitimate daughter of an aristocratic widow and (almost certainly) an exiled Russian anarcho-nihilist, originally employed as a tutor to her children. She escaped a peculiar and dismal childhood in Geneva and took to living and travelling in the Sahara dressed as an Arab man. She became a member of the Qadryas — a sufi society with a pronouncedly mystical interpretation of the teachings of Muhammad — while at the same time having a reputation as highly promiscuous.

Having survived an assassination attempt, she married an Arab and wrote the first draft of an extraordinary novel, *Vagabond*, as well as a substantial number of essays and stories. A heavy hashish user, she was probably the only European woman ever to have ridden in a Bedu *fantasia* (a sort of mystical dervish dance on horseback). After a six-month Muslim mystical retreat, she was drowned in a flash flood in 1904, aged 27.

You might well think that it would be nearly impossible to write a boring book about this woman: you would, sadly, be wrong. Kobak has succeeded against all the odds. Not, it must be said, from lack of effort — **Isabelle: The Life of Isabelle Eberhardt** is detailed, carefully researched and thoughtful — but it is finally and simply dull. There is a problem, of course, in sustaining a full length biography of someone who dies so young.

The problem is greater when, like Eberhardt, the subject has been mythologised. The *fin de siècle* period had an almost morbid fascination with both the "oriental" and the sexually "perverse" and French culture was particularly entangled with political aspirations in North Africa. In addition, although a number of 19th-century women explorers chose to cross-dress for convenience and safety, in Eberhardt's case there is obviously a great deal more to it than this. She was "brought up as a boy" (her own explanation if asked),

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normally used masculine grammar to describe herself (she wrote predominantly in French, although she was an excellent linguist) and dressed in male clothes even in Europe.

Kobak is singularly unhelpful in this rather crucial area. Marina Warner, in her *St Joan*, did a lot better with Joan of Arc on a lot less evidence (there are surprising similarities between the two women). It seems a pity, for example, that Kobak did not explore further Warner's interesting observation about how many cross-dressing women (both in fact and primal fiction) are illegitimate, and grow up fearing incest. This is particularly revealing in Eberhardt's case because her putative father lived with her mother, although their sexual relationship was denied, and her half-sister directly accused him of sexual interference with her. He overtly encouraged (indeed in childhood forced) Eberhardt to dress as a boy.

As Eberhardt was brought up on anarchist principles and in social isolation, the "masculine" expression of her heterosexuality (active, lustful, and frequently casual) ought to raise questions about gender construction and identity. This is not just a psychological question: Eberhardt is famous for the fact that she travelled safely and was respected among tribes which no other European could visit. Kobak suggests that this was partly because she herself was a Muslim (but a Muslim woman!); it must also have had something to do with her self-projection and how that was perceived. Again, her safety among the caravan guides and the native soldiery reminds me forcefully of Joan of Arc and, again, Warner is more sensitive to this phenomenon.

These are merely given as an example of why the book is less than satisfactory. It suffers from a lack of breadth and imagination. Another example is the total failure to make the Saharan scenery and atmosphere in any way present to the reader. Given the reiteration of the importance that it had for Eberhardt, this is a serious deficiency for the ordinary reader, who has never visited any of the long string of desert towns named in the book and does now know what a wadi in flood might look like.

Interestingly, this banality of language and concern is quite absent from Eberhardt's own novel, **Vagabond**, which, although it was never finished and the ending is sadly limp, is delightful. Obviously autobiographical and "first novelish", it tells the story of a young Russian anarchist who feels unable to accept the discipline necessary in pursuit of political freedom. He believes instead that it can only be brought about by each individual casting off all the bonds of convention. Abandoning the stern and elevating love of a good woman, he takes to the road and ends up in the Foreign Legion: a fate brought on by his failure to keep away from active politics. There he believes that he has accomplished perfect detachment and freedom. Sexual desire brings him back to a confrontation with himself which he loses, and he is left recognising his own failure — at least in the first-draft ending that we have.

Although highly romanticised and certainly not a great novel — though it is a gripping yarn, I can tell you — it managed to tell me more about how Eberhardt herself felt about gender roles, sexuality, travelling, the strange vast loveliness of the Saharan desert and the Muslim faith than Kobak begins to touch on. □

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Seriously unserious

Charles Fox

Round About Close to Midnight: The Jazz Writings of Boris Vian
trans. and ed. MIKE ZWERIN *Quartet* £14.95

**In the beginning the word was "laundromat". This was a good word, coined in 1945 by a smart American apartment-block owner who decided to transfer his coin-operated washing machines from the basement laundry room to a nearby shop and convert the vacant space to more apartments. The chance to expose one's dirty washing to the public gaze soon attracted the tenants of all the surrounding blocks as well. It was so successful that Bendix Home Appliances decided that a better word was "launderette" and that British people should be able to join in too. In 1949 they opened three in areas especially chosen as up-market with the view that if the middle-class vanguard went there, the proletariat would follow. And so it proved. It also provided an example for all would-be launderette owners, including Stanley S. Bloom who opened his first launderette (machines supplied by Bendix) in South Kensington in January 1952. His customers ranged from "actresses to charladies" who all seemed to get on famously: "Class distinctions didn't seem to exist in these situations and the launderette became a venue where people of all types could get to know each other better." All launderettes employed two full-time staff to collect the money, "start the machines manually for the customer, show the new customers how to use the machines and generally be of assistance". This golden age lasted until 1960 when other suppliers, mainly Westinghouse, entered the market and washing machines started to become one of consumer durables no well-run home could be without. New shops opened and cut-throat competition led to "coin-ops" which needed fewer staff, and finally to launderettes (now usually part of a national chain), which were unattended altogether, with broken and vandalised machines and debris left by the homeless from the night before. The snake had entered Eden. In *THE LAUNDERETTE: A HISTORY* (*Duckworth, £6.95*), *Stanley Bloom, who has worked in the laundry business all his life, looks back with nostalgia to those "halcyon" days when "boys and girls would meet at the launderette and date each other", and people would "go out for a coffee together while the laundry was being washed, and lasting friendships were made". As the saying goes, those who launderette together get to see each other's underwear. (Vicky Hutchings)*

THE FRENCH have always taken jazz more seriously than anybody else. Hugues Panassié's *Le Jazz Hot,* published in 1934, may not have been the first book which set out to provide the music with an aesthetic — Robert Goffin, a Belgian, nipped in two years earlier with *Aux frontières du jazz* — but it reverberated more than any of the others. And Panassié's friend Charles Delaunay, grasping the fundamental truth that jazz revolved around individual musicians, followed up in 1936 with the first edition of his *Hot Discography,* listing when records were made and who played on them.

Young men writing about jazz in those days only really needed to distinguish between undoubted jazz performers such as Armstrong, Earl Hines and Coleman Hawkins, and "commercial" dance bands like Jack Hylton's and Ray Ventura's. It was an innocent epoch, untroubled by the ideological in-fighting which broke out in the 1940s. That came with the arrival of bebop, denounced by Panassié as a totally alien music but embraced and encouraged by Delaunay. A schism occurred; skirmishing went on. Panassié even excommunicated the Strasbourg Hot Club for putting on a concert by the trumpeter Chet Baker.

This is the background — enchantingly small-minded, full of petty feuding — against which Boris Vian began writing and broadcasting about the music. He played the trumpet; he admired the up-and-coming Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie; above all he had a sense of style that enabled him to make fun of his opponents, the supremest insult of all. Yet, while handing out tweaks rather than upper-cuts, Vian reveals that he too is a creature of his time, believing, like nearly every French jazz fan, that only black Americans really understood the craft — a more tenable view in the late 1940s, incidentally, than it seems today.

Unlike his bête noire Panassié, Vian could get his facts wrong (Stan Kenton never recorded Ellington's "Reminiscing in Tempo" in 1936; Fats Waller *did* visit France, in 1932; neither Nat Cole nor Pearl Bailey nor Lena Horne were to be seen in the film *New Orleans*). But, for a man who declared jazz criticism to be akin to weather-forecasting, he comes up with shrewd comments. Miles Davis (Vian was writing in 1949 remember) has "a monk's sound — somebody who is part of this century but who can look at it with serenity". And after berating "undernourished intellectuals" for suggesting that Charlie Shavers's playing lacked taste, he goes on: "Absence of taste, when combined with enough confidence, becomes a style in itself." (A pity, perhaps, that Vian did not live long enough — he died in 1959, aged 39 — to test that apologia on yet another trumpeter, the Cuban Arturo Sandoval.)

Miles Kington in his introduction offers the theory that Vian was in many respects an American living in a French skin. He did, after all, translate Chandler (the first piece in this book parodies Chandler's hyper-active prose) and Nelson Algren — but also Brendan Behan. An obsession with punning is not the only thing Vian has in common with at least one thread of the Irish literary tradition. The way the pieces refer back and forth, the recurring jokes, the wild digressions; all are reminiscent of the column that Flann O'Brien (well, Brian O'Nolan in real life) used to write in the *Irish Times* under the by-line Myles na gCopaleen (Vian used aliases too, sometimes as far-fetched as those W.C. Fields dreamed up for screen credits).

Translating Vian must have been hellish. Mike Zwerin, a musician and jazz chronicler in his own right, weighed in boldly, taking liberties (I still prefer "Zoiseau", Vian's nickname for Charlie Parker, to Zwerin's substitution, "Ze Bird") but conveying both the sprightliness and the instinct for outrage. In his translator's preface, Zwerin invokes the names of Kerouac and Hemingway when discussing the way Vian uses street-talk. Maybe gutter-syntax — it's meant as a compliment — entered French writing over a decade earlier in the novels of Louis-Ferdinand Céline, a bad boy politically but a writer whose books are likely to outlast that reputation.

This is a book rather like Philip Larkin's collected jazz writings (though not so fallible), to be savoured for the wit, the elegance, the sense of fun, rather than for information. Record collectors who think jazz criticism should be only concerned with picking winners would do well to avoid it. Vian's colleague and contemporary, André Hodeir, adept at analysing jazz performances, may be better suited to their needs. Yet even Hodeir could be jokey, once devising a history of jazz in reverse (it had Armstrong forsaking his Hot Five and Hot Seven to play second cornet with King Oliver). It comes as no surprise to discover that Boris Vian was a founder of the college of Pataphysics, Dadaist in allegiance and made up of people who were serious about not taking themselves seriously. How different from the earnest British, not to mention those American academics with their tape-recorders. □

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As we who are left grow old

Jenny Diski

The Glass Bridge
MARGA MINCO *Peter Owen* £9.95
Positions with White Roses
URSULE MOLINARO *Women's Press* £3.50

THE FINAL BOOK of Primo Levi contains an essay that seems to have disturbed everyone. It deals with survivor guilt. Without denying the depth of suffering, or the essential innocence of the victims of persecution, Levi describes the insoluble anguish of those who survive and have to live with the ghosts of those who did not.

Speaking through his own pain he claims that, by definition, the best died, while the survivors have in some way forever to justify their continued existence. For those of us on the outside, this sounds like delusion; but for a survivor it is an emotional truth that has to be lived with when all the suffering seems to be at an end. There *is* no end to the suffering of the survivor, and no real comfort in the fact of having been an innocent victim. This infliction of perpetual guilt was, Levi claims, the worst of the crimes committed by the Nazis.

Marga Minco's novel **The Glass Bridge** appears at the surface to be the story of a victim: a young woman in hiding in German-occupied Holland. It reads, for the most part, like one of the many documentary accounts of those who have been through such an experience, in the style of a simple diary of events, stripped of artifice. The narrator's parents and, later, the rest of her family are rounded up and disappear, and on both occasions she escapes through the accident of being absent at the moment of danger.

The descriptions of her loss are given without emotional weight:

> A man who lived opposite us came to tell my aunt and uncle: at four-thirty they had cleared out several houses, my parents' house among them. At that very moment I had probably been sitting in the school building working on a multiplication exercise, and looking to see whether the answer was divisible by thirteen. It hadn't been.

Her attempted rape by the resistance worker who provides her with false papers and a place to hide is offered with a similar numbness. The story is one of survival and loss and the tone is of a bemused acceptance of the world as it is. A brief love affair with a second resistance fighter, and his capture, are described in equally muted prose.

It is only through her growing fantasy about the dead girl whose identity she has been given that we get a sense of the deep damage that has been done to the narrator. She expresses concern about the facts of Maria Roselier's life and death in a way that is absent in her memories of those who were close to her.

Her curiosity about the girl who died young, but not at the hands of the Nazis, continues long after the war is over: it is as if Maria's tragedy is greater than her own, and the guilt of surviving engenders an intense relationship with the dead girl whose identity papers are the source of her own continuing life.

What lurks unstated beneath the quiet prose is the burden of being spared.

Guilt stalks the pages of Ursule Molinaro's **Positions with White Roses**, though here the enemies are internal.

A woman evaluates her relationship with her absent twin sister in the sullen, angry atmosphere between her ageing parents at the dinner table. The twin was born deformed and her able-bodied sister takes on the guilt of her disability, haunted by the fantasy that she caused the damage *in utero*. She pays penance with her own body, offering herself to men in the name of her sexually inactive sister.

The relationship between the two daughters is counterpointed by the internal monologues of their parents, as each silently accuses the other of damaging their life irreparably. All the accusations remain unspoken so that nothing can ever be checked against reality. It becomes clear that the old people do not want a resolution, and that the remaining energy of their relationship depends on the drama of silence.

The narrator's guilt-laden life is one of irresolute wandering until she meets the woman who aborts her foetus.

Claire Fontaine, a latterday Cathar, represents, as her name overemphatically suggests, the source of things. The novel begins to dissolve at this point into a thumbnail sketch of Cathar philosophy, and the ill-fitting, sentimental panacea it offers for our current spiritual and political emptiness is a disappointing contrivance.

Molinaro's overstylised prose is also a contrivance: "and" is replaced throughout the text with an ampersand, sentences are aborted by full stops, gaps appear between the words where a comma would have served: "Even though there existed as yet no culture gap between men & women. Which was not introduced until some 300 years later during the 16th century." The style is a constant irritation, no more than a pointless gimcrack in a narrative that is powerful and intriguing enough not to need it.

Kaleidoscope of madnesses

Leslie Dick

Survival Arts
IAN WEDDE *Faber* £3.95

THERE ARE NOVELS that give meaning away, open-handedly explaining themselves, and then there are novels that delineate the limits of knowledge, reproducing the light opacity of the world, and leaving it up to the reader to figure out the implications.

Ian Wedde's novel *Survival Arts* opens with an epigraph from J.H. Fabre: "To know how not to know might well be the last word in wisdom."

Wedde's book insists on the difficult pleasures of deciphering the almost incomprehensible. He writes the vivid outline of things, reporting with staggering precision the staccato rhythms, interruptions and simultaneous overlaps of familiar speech, fragmentary conversation jammed full of in-jokes and private references. Memories and past sensation lie just under the surface, breaking through without warning. Catch-phrases are repeated, encapsulating a whole wild world view, like "get the inside on the outside", a touchstone returned to in moments of doubt or excitement. As the sparkling pattern of this book unfolds, connecting past and present, we come closer to understanding what's meant by these cryptic sentences, these sensations.

Set in Wellington, New Zealand, Wedde's description of this "ludicrous toy city" is truly cinematic, with lots of speedy cutting and the reflected lurid brilliance of technicolour on the big screen. Four disparate groups of people coincide, arbitrarily, on the sunny street outside the Auction Mart, opposite the Rub-a-Dub car wash. Their perceptions collide, obliquely, as point of view shifts, each taking the others in, peripherally, coincidentally.

They drive around town (in a red Porsche, a Valiant automatic, and a battered J4 van). Gradually their differing paranoias intersect and separate insanities come together in a wild ending of comic disaster.

Each group has its own crazed project. The lesbians in the J4 buy a deep freeze to set up a sperm bank specialising in the sperm of great New Zealand athletes. The crippled vet, his leg shot up in Cambodia, haunted by memories of the war and heroin on the Gulf of Thailand, has an M24 Chaffee light tank to sell. Wallace, punked-out nympho complete with yacht and Porsche, has drugs and sex compulsively with her Samoan, Clint Eastwood look-alike, pick-up Jackson, impelled by a personal mythology based on the mating habits of spiders.

The only place Jackson really feels good is in the car wash.

Meanwhile Snag, Ike and Snow make up another arbitrary family, held together by what can't be spoken, stories never finished, affection never expressed.

They're all as mad as hatters, and the stunning achievement of this novel is to make these oddballs irresistible and entertaining. It maintains a balance between what we don't know and the gradually coalescing kaleidoscopic detail which makes just enough sense to keep us fascinated. The past continually invades present consciousness, where it bumps up against future wishes, intentions and possibilities.

The underlying dynamic of the book is in this depiction of experience as the meeting place of perception, memory and fantasy. Wedde manages all this by a combination of *tour de force* writing and a high level of bizarre humour. From the first page you're seduced by the sheer power of the writing: "His leg was hurting like a bastard and the phantom of his sundown fix came to whisper melancholy in his ear." Later you're intoxicated by sex on the yacht, involving an ice cream gateau and Wallace's long thighs, "the colour of peeled bananas".

Never quite knowing what's going on pays off, as meaning is disclosed in sudden, poetic glimpses, and wonder takes the place of easy satisfaction.

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Required reading on the terraces

Steve Pinder

Sport in Britain
TONY MASON *Faber* £4.95

AT THE END of last year, I was fortunate enough to be asked by Hugh Stephenson of the City University, ex-editor of this organ, to teach a term of mornings on sports journalism.

Dutifully, like any new tutor, my first thoughts were for a reading list. It didn't take long and it was short, because sports books fall into relatively rigid categories: the biog. of the star/team/competition, the instructional guide to improve the game, the history (date by date), a genre that favours cricket, and, a bit fringey admittedly, the plethora of body fitness/diet books. I was left contemplating the paucity of sports literature that actually says something in either a literary or cultural way about a massive industry/activity which, like it or not, impinges on all our lives in some way.

The excellent Sportspages imprint, dedicated to republishing the works of such greats as Paul Gallico, Thomas Boswell and George Plimpton, stands as a lonely beacon with the odd spark coming from the likes of Adrianne Blue, whose *Grace Under Pressure* (Sidgwick, £7.95) was not just a look at women in sport but a personal, readable and witty read at the same time.

But most noticeable was the total lack of one volume that brought together all the strands of sport and Britain: history, culture, society, money, media — think of all the aspects of life sport touches.

The yawning gap has been filled and next year's intake will be given *Sport in Britain* as mandatory reading. Mason, a social historian at the University of Warwick, is also the author of the seminal *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, a book I've re-read with pleasure.

And this latest book by him cuts across all barriers, of interest to academics as much as to the Bloke Behind You On The Terrace.

He starts by examining the four most important issues affecting sport today: money, prejudice, drugs and violence. With each, he balances example (the selling of the League Cup to the National Dairy Council in 1982) with contextualisation (the rise of the sponsor, the ban on tobacco advertising on television). Having set the contemporary scene, he then returns to the beginning, when cricket had players and gentlemen, when women's roles in sport were much different and when gambling was OK for the ruling class but definitely out for the workers (ruination, you see).

And, finally, he draws his threads and arguments together with a look at the theories and opinions that his analysis has engendered. To be honest, there is little controversy in this part (or in the whole book), but the placing of factors like the professionalisation of sport alongside those such as the growth in media coverage, the juxtaposition of the winning ethic with the growth in participation and the growth of sport in response to public interest (and the occasional decline) paints a broad picture.

Obviously, such a book cannot be exhaustive but, if there are any serious omissions, I could not spot them. The whole is an assimilable read that, despite already having been overtaken by some events (Mason remarks on the absence of black quarterbacks in American football; this year's Superbowl was one by Washington Redskins with just such a player) is, frankly, essential. □

When she says I hate you

Christine Orton

Daughters Who Care
JANE LEWIS and BARBARA MEREDITH *Routledge* £19.95 & £8.95.

THERE HAS ALWAYS EXISTED an anonymous army of older people caring for even older relatives at home. Now, however, they have a name — carers — and there has also begun to be some recognition of their plight. Less fortunately, as *Daughters Who Care* clearly shows, very little has been done as yet to help them: the majority still struggle on unaided, often breaking down themselves under the financial and emotional strains of looking after a physically, possibly mentally, disabled elderly person alone.

The majority are women. The Equal Opportunities Commission has found that there are at least one and a quarter million female carers in Britain, while a recent analysis of the General Household Survey reveals that only 35 per cent of carers are men. As the book points out, in promoting "care in the community" the government has stated that the family — in practice, women — must expect to provide the bulk of care in the future.

Daughters Who Care concentrates on 41 women who had devoted a long period of their lives — 33 years in one case — to caring for their mothers. Through in-depth interviews, the authors have drawn conclusions about their experiences and the needs of carers in general. The bulk of the sample seem remarkably accepting: whether single or married, employed or not, they see the caring, if nothing else, as their duty. Many actively chose to do it — especially those who already had a close relationship with their mothers — and most certainly wanted to avoid residential home or hospital if humanly possible.

At the same time, they are unanimously critical of the lack of support and understanding from statutory services and others. Although community care is supposed to be a shared venture between professionals and family, it seldom appears to work like that.

Much of the book makes tough reading because it doesn't try to gloss over the reality of looking after an elderly person who may not only be physically and emotionally dependent but also incontinent and mentally unstable. In quotes from the interviews, a graphic picture builds up of the daily drain of washing, lifting, turning, feeding, toiletting, cleaning up and, mostly, staying in. Love, frustration, anger, loneliness and guilt entangle the carers in an ever diminishing domestic trap.

Some of the daughters get through unscathed, usually because of a mutually supportive relationship with an appreciative parent whose mental health remains intact. They see the experience as rewarding, even uplifting. "I was in touch with real life as never before," says one daughter. But others tell stories that horrify: "You'd get up two or three times a night and you'd think 'I've got to be up at six in the morning' and you're wandering around then trying to get a filthy nightdress off without getting it over her, you and everything else and she's turning around and hitting you and saying I hate you . . . "

When support is available in the form of care attendants, volunteer helpers or welfare benefits, the older person may refuse it. But information is so sparse that carers often don't know help exists anyway, or find it doesn't fit their needs. One daughter describes waiting around half the day for transport to take her mother to and from the day centre for a couple of hours; another is provided with a homehelp to wash up, when what she needs is someone to bath her mother. But above all it is *understanding* that the carers find lacking. Trying to explain her practical difficulties at home, one was told by her GP: "I haven't got time to sit here and listen to your emotional problems." Another's doctor advised her to give up work, ignoring the fact that her income was crucial.

Except by reassuring them that they aren't alone with their difficulties, this book won't be especially helpful to carers. But for every professional in the medical and social services field, and maybe for those men who see caring as the woman's job, it should be essential reading. "I don't know what happens in their home life," comments one daughter, "whether they know what it's like to juggle with a commitment to a job and three meals a day and someone's diabetic or incontinent and needs you . . . They have no idea." □

Christine Orton's "Care for the Carers" will be published by Thorsons early next year.

Kitchen-sink of the absurd

Hilary Bichovsky-Little

The Wantmakers, Lifting the Lid Off the World Advertising Industry: How They Make You Buy
ERIC CLARK *Hodder* £14.95

DOES KEN LIVINGSTONE owe his parliamentary seat to the activities of Boase Massimi Pollit, a London advertising agency? Almost certainly, according to Eric Clark's *The Wantmakers*. This particular suggestion is not an exposé, since the facts are publicly to hand, but it does come as a bit of a surprise.

In 1983, faced by the prospect of abolition, the GLC engaged Boase Massimi Pollit to design an anti-abolition campaign for them. Prospects looked grim: most people hated Ken Livingstone and had little idea what the GLC did anyway. BMP embarked on a lot of research and eventually came

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up with an angle that sparked off some real interest (the only one out of seven that did): in abolishing the GLC the government was taking away Londoners *right to vote*.

Interviewees were outraged: this was anti-democratic and un-British. The campaign ran on this issue. At that time Livingstone was polled to be so unpopular that it was decided that no pictures of him should be used at all. After four months of the campaign the number of people opposed to the abolition had risen from 32 to 55 per cent and half a number of Tory MPs polled thought abolition was a vote-loser. Additionally, the number of people who were unaware of the whole issue had fallen from 45 to 21 per cent and Livingstone's popularity had increased sufficiently for him to appear on posters over the slogan "If you want me out, vote me out".

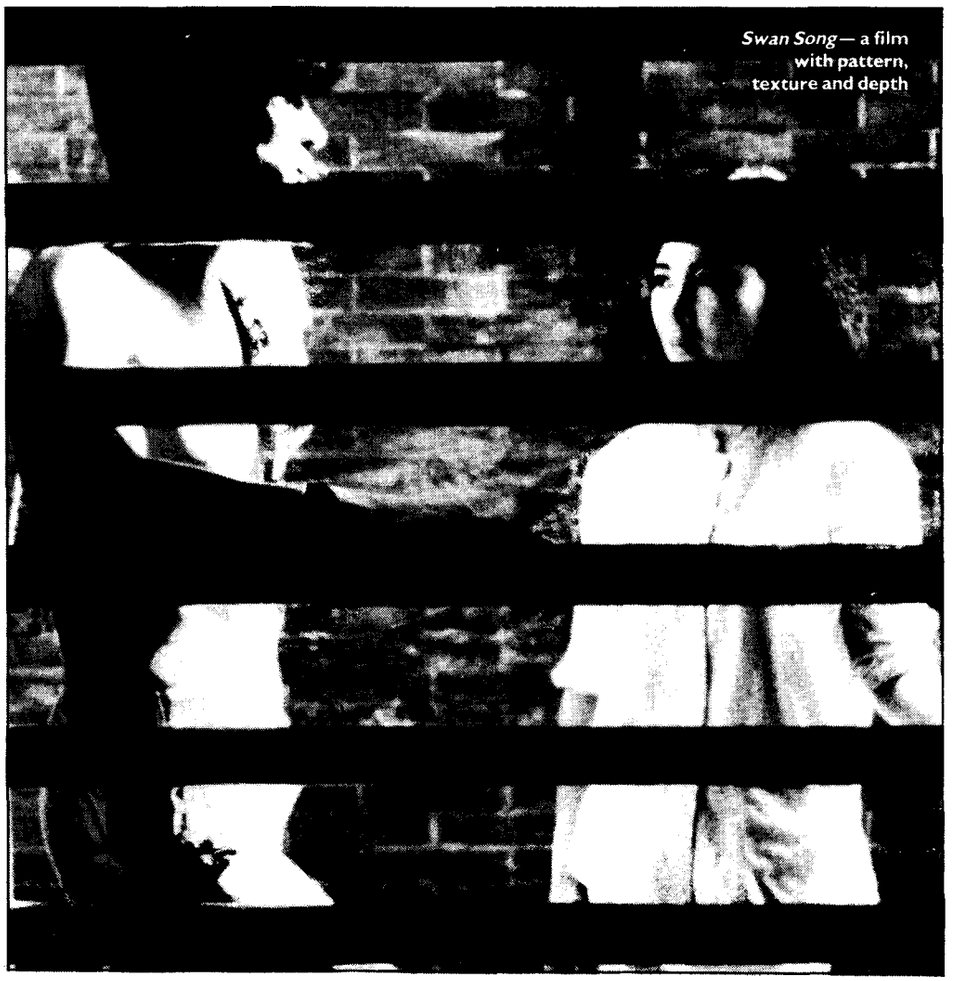
By the end of 1984 the campaign had had so much impact that the High Court ruled that such campaigns should restrict themselves to information and forego "persuasive slogans". In response to this the final phase of the campaign went ahead with the purely "informative" message that three quarters of Londoners were by this time opposed to the abolition. In terms of swaying public opinion, the campaign was a great success. It failed only because the government ignored public opinion while being sufficiently impressed with the influence of the adverts to pass a bill banning any such "political propaganda" in the future. Ken Livingstone, meanwhile, became an MP.

I relate this story in detail party because the implications of it are so confusing and partly to whet your appetite. *The Wantmakers* is cram-packed with similar information, most of it whacky enough for the back of a crisp-packet. Somebody somewhere should be able to cook some ideas out of these facts — but it's not Eric Clark. After reading his book with grim fascination, I reached the conclusion — "be vigilant, you are the target for all this" — so dazed by the flow of information that I could no longer remember whether I felt cynical about the whole issue or not. And cynicism is the key.

What are we to make, for instance, of the knowledge that, in order to probe the unconscious of potential customers, research companies have been known to ask women to role-play being a kitchen sink giving the come-on to its favourite detergent brand (another woman) while being watched, unknown to them, with video cameras through one way glass? From a cynical point of view it's an entertaining story; from any other point of view it's an appalling human waste.

Clark himself indulges in no such moralising, but somebody's got to. After three years interviewing "the people who matter" in the ad. industry, the sum of his theorising is this: "Advertising exists and, short of world-changing upheaval, will continue to exist. A world without it is now inconceivable." But every page of his book is evidence of how badly such a world-changing upheaval is needed and, although the book is promoted as being "not anti-advertising", it's clear that Clark was disgusted by much of what he found. However, since advertisers are notorious for bragging about their amorality he presumably decided that being outraged by his data was a waste of time. *The result is a dense, amazing, but* curiously disengaged book, as fascinating and as devoid of feeling as an encyclopaedia. □

ARTS



Swan Song— a film with pattern, texture and depth

Once more with feeling

Although still troubled by censorship, the Chinese cinema, says **JUDITH WILLIAMSON**, *is creating an aesthetic in many ways more powerful than that permitted by box-office dictates in the West*

SWAN SONG OPENS with a shot of the narrow Canton street where Ou Laoshou, an old composer, lives; the image of its roadway winding between high walls is repeated over and over in this economical film, which spans a period of about 30 years and leaves a lasting impression of being hemmed in on both sides.

Swan Song's director, Zhang Zeming, is one of the generation of Chinese filmmakers whose work has developed in the decade since the re-opening of the Beijing film school in 1978. While there is still some Party censorship (the most recent example of a film which was altered is *The Big Parade*, reviewed in *NS* 18 March), these "fifth generation filmmakers", as they are known in China, have been able to address the problems of the Cultural Revolution (and Party bureaucracy — cf *The Black Cannon Incident*) extraordinarily frankly.

Zhang Nuanxin's *Sacrificed Youth* — which opens here in the summer — speaks, as its title suggests, both of and from that "lost" generation which grew up during the Cultural Revolution's dominant years and whose formative experience was the clash between traditional, regional cultures and the uniform official cultural line. *Sacrificed Youth* is very much a "growing up movie", narrated in the first person and delicately tuned through the sensibility of its heroine. But *Swan Song* too, though its subject is the music of an ageing composer, charts in a more disturbing way the confusing experience of his son.

The son, Guanzai, lives alone with Ou Laoshou — whose wife, a much younger professional singer, divorced him after the Liberation and went off, taking her daughter, to make a successful career with the State Opera. The film lets us learn this information gradually and unobtrusively, placing less emphasis on the telling of a story than

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on the emotional import of scenes which give a sense both of the complexity of relationships and the texture of life as it is lived by the main characters. At the beginning of the film it is the early 1960s and Ou Laoshou has just composed a new piece; he plays it to the local, amateur orchestra of blind musicians whose traditional instruments produce the sound he desires and who cherish his work in their small community. The piece itself, with a particularly haunting, poignant theme, is repeated throughout the film, part of whose function is literally to do what it is about — preserving a traditional musical aesthetic (just as *Sacrificed Youth*'s lush cinematography provides an image of the colourful Dai culture discovered by its heroine).

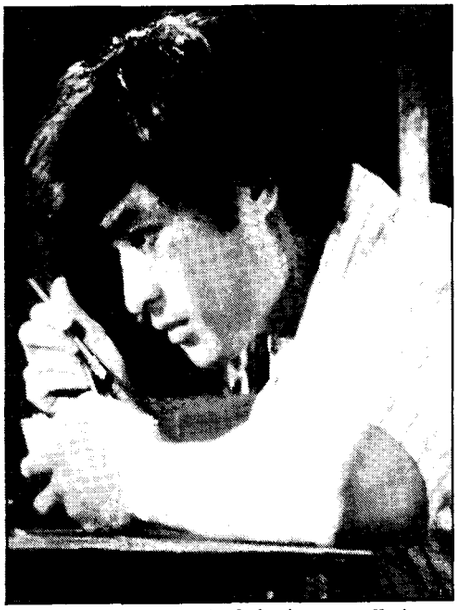
While his little band loves Ou Laoshou's music, he is not allowed to publish any of it; Party officials tell him it's too "mournful" and command him to produce something rousing. Meanwhile, he is teaching the boy Guanzai to play traditional music, and father and son are close despite occasional rows as the unworldly composer forgets to buy food, spending his money at teahouses. As times become harder the conflict between father and son becomes harsher, until the height of the Cultural Revolution when Ou Laoshou is viciously harassed and punished and Guanzai, seeing this, runs away from home.

The way this scene is presented is typical of the film's sparse aesthetic: we never see the harassment of his father but see Guanzai looking over a high wall, and hear the violent questioning. The next shot is simply of the wall, filling the screen, and the small boy walks past. There is something dramatically unsentimental about the way his experience is handled; whatever pain is internalised in his rejection of the father is entirely implicit, and therefore in a way internalised by the film itself, suffusing its entire tone. Years later Guanzai returns to find his father even more broken and responds with anger, even when the old man tries to make reparation by cooking special meals: he sells Ou Laoshou's beloved (and banned) lute, to get money to go away again. Meanwhile an old colleague now living in Hong Kong visits them and Ou Laoshou entrusts some precious compositions to him, begging him to get them published. A few months later he hears them performed on the radio — and attributed to the dead, officially recognised composer He Dasha.

The scene where Ou Laoshou hears his work credited to someone else is traumatic enough, but when he burns his still unpublished manuscripts on his deathbed it is almost unbearable to watch. Yet as he dies the local band plays his music, so that it actually becomes the film's own accompaniment to this most moving and distressing scene. Like everything else in the film, its emotional effect derives from understatement. We are simply forced to watch manuscript after manuscript flaring up in the tin basin until only ashes remain, and even then the shot is held on the embers snaking in the bottom.

This is another striking aspect of the film's visual style — its use of natural light. The new Chinese cinema is producing an aesthetic with colour film that is as textured, and as graphic, as that of the most highly shaded black and white. *Swan Song* is to contemporary Hollywood's flattened colour as expressionism or *film noir* is to the brightly-lit studio set piece of the 1930s. In Ou Laoshou's small apartment the overhead light bulb brings a small pool of the room to the screen just as the film itself selects its few exchanges and incidents from the bigger, darker history it draws on. The film actually becomes gloomier as Ou Laoshou goes downhill; after he dies, Guanzai seeks the bright lights of the city, but the Western way — lit by Coca-Cola and Marlborough signs — merely creates the other wall that bounds his path. The long-lost sister makes contact and copies out drafts of Ou Laoshou's music, promising to make him famous. But Guanzai watches on TV the concert where she performs it in grossly Westernised style, on a grand piano — and claims to have composed it.

The film ends with Guanzai listening to a distant street vendor's song — something his father used to copy down. The suggestion is that traditional culture lives on in the vernacular — neither "reformed" nor Westernised. Yet it also lives in the film itself, which, like the other new films coming out of China, succeeds in producing a powerful sense of what the Cultural Revolution damaged, while avoiding Western forms and developing a distinctive aesthetic of its own. Rain, light, the roofs of buildings, the ground — the frame holds these, I was going to say surfaces, except I've been writing too much about surfaces recently and, besides, the surfaces of roof, walls, water, close-up and filling the screen, are shown precisely not as surfaces but as pattern, texture, depth. There is a materiality to this kind of filmmaking that eludes the supposedly "materialistic" West. Money-grubbing as it is, a film like *Wall Street* (the current No.1 here) is pure idealism: the financial remoteness of what it shows, to its popular audience, is matched by a kind of remoteness in the image, that window through which we gaze longingly. *Swan Song,* by contrast, makes you feel things in the two senses of the physical and emotional combined. The route that new Chinese cinema is steering between Party line and the West is not nearly as narrow as that of our own box office. □



Angry, the son rejects the father's peace offering

"Swan Song" is showing at the ICA, London, to 3 June.

ART

Ride a cockhorse to make women cross

James Hall

Five German Painters of Today
Goethe Institute, 50 Princes Gate, London SW7 until 11 June

IF YOU WERE ASKED to describe the typical German artist of the '80s, the 1983 exhibition catalogue, *Expressions: New Art From Germany*, would be as good a starting point as any. This Saint Louis exhibition was the first American group showing of the German Neo-Expressionists — Baselitz, Immendorf, Kiefer, Lupertz, Penck.

Flicking through the catalogue a full half-decade ago, we would probably have been struck, not so much by the exhibits, as by the grim black and white photos of the painters (even rougher than Silly Stallone whom we'd just seen splashing about in one of his Technicolour blood baths): bearded, skin-headed, cigar-holding Baselitz, gloating over a wooden sculpture that might have suffered a chain-saw massacre; bearded, skin-headed Immendorf, with fag and leather jacket; skin-headed and dark-suited Lupertz, with knuckle-duster-sized rings on impeccably clean fingers; bearded, lumberjack Penck, stuffed into a war-torn jacket, and, as the incomparable centre-piece, there would be no photo of Kiefer, the absent, protected Godfather.

So your average male German artist of the '80s would look like a cross between a contract killer and a garden gnome. He would never dream of holding a paint-brush: instead big rings, fags and cigars display the short fuse of these artistic tempers.

Five German Artists of Today tries to give a very different picture of contemporary German art. For a start, all the artists are female. Women have been almost entirely excluded from the pantheon of '80s art.

The two exhibitions that heralded the return to painting (the Royal Academy's *A New Spirit in Painting* in 1981, and Berlin's *Zeitgeist* in 1982) included only one woman in about 60 artists and this was Susan Rothenberg, who paints the tamest of horses — there, no doubt, for all those wild men to ride around upon.

Unfortunately, the leaflet accompanying this exhibition treats the five women artists in a similar way. Their work is not described as an alternative to an aggressive, macho aesthetic, but becomes its foil.

Contemporary art is apparently no longer interested in commitment or polemic: "The five artists in this exhibition steer clear of prescriptive strait-jackets. They delight rather in the wide range of possibilities which their profession opens up to them. With all their vigour of self-expression and freshness of approach, they have been selected — not to prove a point — but in the hope that their painting may stimulate and give pleasure." Their

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profession sounds like that of the accomplished, and uncorseted, society hostess. Their threadbare biographies compound the service-industry status by principally emphasising the famous Professors whom they studied *under*. A glance at the Saint Louis *Expressions* catalogue tells you who all those artists studied *with* . . .

The five women in this exhibition deserve better publicity than this. Certainly the work ignores the Neo-Expressionist "grand narratives" and tends towards lyrical, organic abstraction, but the massing of forms and colours is frequently highly-wrought. Ulla von Gierke paints small gouaches in which black, brown and dark blue anthropomorphic shapes are grouped together in tight squares or rectangles. On a small section of the perimeter a streak of bright colour is inscribed. Bright colours seem to be eclipsed or repressed by the dark central mass.

There is no mistaking the tumescent/detumescent quality of many of the anthropomophic shapes, and the work's tension comes from these intimations of a simmering and suffocating eroticism. Margitta Abels' paintings are similar to von Gierke's, but the forms are more diffuse and the colour rather wishy-washy.

The work is withdrawn rather than extrovert. This is largely because most of these artists paint on highly absorbent materials like paper or cardboard, so the colour appears to sink into the surface rather than projecting forward like the thick layers of oil on canvas of the Neo-Expressionists. Elizabeth Vary uses oil on paper but in a very sketchy manner. There is usually a dark spherical or oval form, like a seed-pod, that seems to bounce off the edge of other more angular shapes.

The largest paintings are by Bettina Mauel, who makes seven-foot-square "scrolls". The vertical edge of each work is fixed to a pole, so they are like Oriental wall-paintings which can be rolled up and put away — they can literally be "withdrawn". She generally uses yellows and browns and allows the paint to drip, which causes a vertical patterning. Her work often suggests a sun-lit landscape, or a field of some kind. Isolde Warwin paints a stark neo-primitive and child-like sign language that resembles Penck's work, though on a much smaller scale.

Perhaps the most important question to ask is how art by women can be progressive if it seems to centre on a mythology of creation (just as male art often centres on a mythology of destruction). Both Warwin and Mauel's work curls out at the edges to suggest an enclosing, womb-like space, and the "withdrawn" qualities of the work could turn it into a docile receptacle. I would argue that the work of Gierke and Vary, especially, is progressive because the small, unassuming nature of their work is not an acceptance of obedient, behind-the-scenes status.

Rather, it is a severely restricted and underdeveloped space which suggests the presence of an intense claustrophobia.

Every single work is "Untitled", and as all five artists come from the same Cologne gallery it would be interesting to know whether they agreed to this anonymous, non-committal packaging, or whether this is simply a strategy to suggest their other-worldiness and seen-but-not-heardness. It is a great shame that they have been presented as hobby-horses — good for a joy-ride. □

TELEVISION

Graphics at Greyfriars

W. Stephen Gilbert

TRENDY IS NOT the same as young. I am pretty much the contemporary of Janet Street-Porter so I do not constitute the audience at whom the programmes that the BBC has expensively hired Street-Porter to make are aimed. But I don't think you have to be young yourself to spot those trendy types who try to pass themselves off as (ghastly phrase) young at heart. Street-Porter has begun her reign with a sequence of programmes under the trendily delphic title *Def II*, probably meant to undermine the nervously mature who wonder how on earth they managed to miss the non-existent *Def I*. They need worry not a whit. *Def II* is mutter dressed as rap.

Last week's pair (the programming sequence takes over the early part of both Monday and Wednesday evenings on BBC2) was linked by Harry Enfield, mostly in his already over-exposed Loadsamoney persona. The previous week's link was Susie Blake. Such casting is mere playing safe, both in the sense that these characters are well-known and (in Enfield's case anyway) likely to bring viewers with them, and in the sense that they're solid pros and so can be relied on not to commit a youthful naughty of any kind. Neither, in short, could be called unfledged.

Besides these names, there are the real stars of the show: graphics. The explosion in computer animation, paintbox, Quantel and associated tools of the decorating trade has opened the way for a visual style that is never still. Thus no image may pass by unenhanced, the retina must be assaulted without surcease and as bald an image as a head-on, head-and-shoulders shot is deemed to be The Death of The Ratings unless the performer is engaged in being funny. But these graphics do come expensive. The compromise that Street-Porter has brought with her from LWT's now-returning show for C4, the equally arcanely-titled *Network 7*, is to run endless ribbons of written information across the screen, whatever else there may be to look at.

The most impenetrable input comes from a BBC Scotland programme which is called . . . yes, you guessed it . . . *FSd*. The brief here is admirable, or anyway *fairly* admirable: to provide a showcase for rock groups on the indie circuit in Scotland. Fair enough; so-called narrowcasting (programming of highly specialist appeal) has its place in the scheme of things and, unless Dixieland freaks on Rockall start demanding equal time, we shall smile with not too much show of a rictus on this enterprise. But, although I *watched* an edition of *FSd*, I didn't *see* anything. The young musos spoke and played — probably very well — but their images were highly doctored and, throughout speech as well as song, screeds of captioned material floated through the bottom of the screen or, worse, down the side of the screen or, worse yet, *both at once*. Often these sentences cut out in the middle. Result? Your correspondent's brain o.d's. Recovering later over a large whisky and ice, this newly cured fair-weather rock fan reflects that what this kind of production exhibits is merely contempt for both the material and the audience. The producer believes that the music and talk need constant juicing-up, yet that the audience is too quiescent to resent unreadable material.

Elsewhere on *Naff II* (as I try not to call it), bought-in and archive material is simply being taken aboard as part of the package. I may be old but, if we're to have re-runs of *Bunter* and *Pugwash* and *Sooty* and *Wacko!*, I want to see a whole episode, not just a snatch. And I especially loathe to be distracted by captions I cannot read (in red, very small and often up so briefly that even a speed-reader could get no further than the first line). While we're at it, *is* there a young audience for clips from programmes from the dim and distant? I have a shrewd suspicion it's much more likely to be my and Janet's generation for whom these relics have their appeal. Indeed, under the tumultuous surface, I detect an enterprise that reflects almost nothing of a sensibility in its teens or twenties, almost everything of an old hippie magpie with a nostalgia for a '50s childhood. Stiff II.

Graphics feature heavily on *Wired*, C4's much-anticipated, late-night replacement for *The Tube*. Snapper Films made the titles and link sequences and very smart and aggressive they are too. There is a pair of presenters, so calculatedly complementary as to be a joke. The woman, Lenore Pemberton, is black, effusive and barely able to contain her enthusiasm that she's based in New York City. The man is Tim Graham, white, laid-back, lolloping round London with a carefully cultivated prole accent. The in-between-times mix is conventional enough: bands and soloists perform and maybe talk, some issues are given a cursory airing and you are constantly given to understand that everything is really great.

A chat show for young viewers has been devised by HTV and handed over to the retired treble Aled Jones to host. **Chatterbox** has an obvious fault: it's trying to do too much. As with the other youth programming, everything is predicated on the notion that the young won't concentrate on any item if it's longer than three-and-a-half minutes; on any shot beyond three-and-a-half seconds. This approach is tough on Jones who has all the makings of a self-possessed and plausible presenter but who is obliged to perform in a panic. The result is that language lets him down ("these young people both have one thing in common") and then, signing off a deeply awful item about a one-legged mite who had saved his brothers from a fire, sheer incoherence follows: "Hopefully, it won't happen to you but, if it does, just remember Graham." □

Wish us well

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POP

Death wish '88

Jon Savage

IT'S BEEN A BUSY month in the global sweet shop. Flushed with the success of their high-profile sponsorship of the BPI Awards — Euro vice-president Wayne Mailloux got more airtime than Rick Astley — Pepsi-Cola announced their latest tie-up in early May: their sponsorship of fizzy popsters Bros' first UK concert tour. The press picture had the boys — in their biker jackets and Levis' 501's hoicked up revealingly high — spraying cans of the revolting concoction in an orderly fashion.

Stung, Coca-Cola has made sure to get into the act. At the recent IMMC conference in Montreux, Coca Cola "World Wide Media" vice-president Bill Lynn delivered the following keynote speech: "By the year 2,000, I think we'll see the targeting of brand-specific music artists, marketed precisely to products. Music will play a major role in this new commercial reality — the emergence of a global market." Although bottled pop and pop music have been handmaidens ever since the Second World War, as part of the same ideological and economic drive, rarely has the connection been so clearly stated and with such chilling implications.

These sticky stains of infantilism permeate the media industries' postmodern treatment of pop and its culture: from thumb-sucking bimbos through product-specific advert soundtracks to the celebration of bad taste and baby-boomer nostalgia of youth-targeted television. "Feel good about yourselves" is the message to and from the postwar baby-boom generation controlling the media; "We are the world". This infantilism marks the increasing invasion of the commodity, and its death impulse, into the world of the child or young adolescent — whether in child abuse or through a paedophiliac media — at the same time as the "innocence" of children is invoked to justify oppression: *viz* the original moral panic behind the Section 28 legislation.

Within pop and its forever shifting ideology, it lulls and panders, persuading people that pop music was never important, could never be an agent of change, is simply composed of endless packets of multi-coloured jelly-babies. Here Adorno links up with *Q,* the pop pages of the *Sun* or the producers of *Night Network*. From the view of the multi-nationals dominating the media industries, this is the way that they want you to think. The modern media model in the UK is not a bright constellation of planets and satellites — as the access brigade would have it — but an airless world funnelled through a toll-gate: highly policed, open only to those with money, operating a policy which fits very well with the Thatcherite social model of *exclusion*.

Music reflects power politics but it is also a site for social struggle: the ideologues of the New Right have temporarily succeeded in erasing this particular dialectic. Another reading, however, is suggested by Jacques Attali in *Noise:*

> Music is prophecy. Its styles and economic organisation are ahead of the rest of society because it explores, much faster than material reality can, the entire range of possibilities in a given code. It makes audible the new world that will gradually become visible, that will impose itself and regulate the order of things; it is not only the image of things, but the *transcending of the everyday, the herald of the future.*

Some pop music still performs this function, only the funnelling process makes sure that you won't hear it. It is a fact, however, that major label chart items provided only one half of total LP sales during 1987. In the penumbra just outside the mainstream's blinding light, a decentralised economic organisation — hardly revolutionary in itself — nevertheless gives the space for different voices to seep through. They arrive every month, like postcards or blurred snapshots from abroad: the visions that they are now offering show a way out of pop's postmodern impasse of a serial past.

Wire's LP *A Bell Is a Cup Until It Is Struck* (Mute) uses fragments — puns, snippets of everyday speech and official language, allied with brilliantly organised, sweeping music — not to deconstruct but to *re*construct a narrative that here offers glimpses of a new, remote, European classicism. This austerity is echoed by the latest EP from Dusseldorf's Strafe Für Rebellion (Un/Touch), which reworks elements from widely different genres — the queasy, fundamental noise of industrial music, the pleasure and range of the operatic female voice, the forward drive of post-punk rock — way beyond pastiche into a mixture that gives today's culture a cool, yet horrified glance, as if seen in a museum 100 years hence.

Unlike these glimpses of a world "in which nothing will happen anymore", the Band of Susans' *Hope Against Hope* (Furthur) — extraordinarily for a New York nihilist/noise band — confronts the present head on. Their atonality and chordal repetition is here resolved into songs that struggle for shape from out of the holocausts of noise. "We stare into the future each day and live for the hope that some help is on the way and try to feel for all those lives have been pulled away," they chant on "All The Wrong Reasons"; "I The Jury" works through lyrics like "Here's another chance to get it right", to end with a deliberate inversion of the famous Rolling Stones 1965 curse: "This *won't* be the last time." This collective struggle is both compassionate and liberating.

Mere snapshots, but these musicians take for granted the lack that is at the centre of commodity capitalism: that crippling, yet free-floating, permanent state of anxiety often defined as "adolescence", where it is most keenly felt, and then kept in place through the industrial exploitation of that age and its psychic state. In mapping out this barren landscape, they are accurately describing the present and future — a necessary step in countering commodity capitalism's increasingly manifest death wish. □

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NATIONAL THEATRE

Hallmark of a legacy

Victoria Radin

IF ANY NAME spells out the plusher wing of subsidised theatre it is that of Peter — since 1977, Sir Peter — Hall. In 1960 he created the Royal Shakespeare Company; in 1973, having eased Olivier out of the door, he oversaw what turned out to be the fairly ignoble exodus of the National Theatre from the Old Vic to the South Bank.

The mid-1970s, when small was beautiful, was not the optimum period for the establishment of a lavish new theatrical emporium. The Vic's valedictory production, John Osborne's *Watch It All Come Down* (known by the company as "What Shit"), seemed to herald the ruin which subsequently materialised in building delays as well as the famous plumbers' strike which brought the brave new theatre bathetically to its knees. The lacklustre opening productions of *Tamburlaine* and *Hamlet* augmented the baying of a thousand fringe theatres who regarded the NT as nothing less than a cannibal.

Hall's own morose and testy record of those early NT years is unwisely preserved in his published *Diaries* — an unnecessarily breast-baring document in which he fails to connect his own persecuted reaction to criticism to the woe his revelations might do his friends. The enmity of Harold Pinter, only recently assuaged, was one result.

But the *Diaries* highlighted several other less attractive traits that often obscured the good and fundamentally selfless work Hall has done: the greed that recently made him unfairly a subject of vilification by the *Sunday Times;* the blindness or bloody-mindedness vis-à-vis his public image, which created enemies even from amongst those people on his own side; and a certain dourness — a failure to rejoice.

As he relinquishes the NT to head a Rolls Royce company based at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket (first production Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending* with Vanessa Redgrave), he leaves behind a theatre which has gradually overtaken the RSC, whose record in experiment (the Bill Bryden/Bill Dudley Promenades and his own work with *The Oresteia*) has been as interesting as anything in Britain and a willingness to stand up to authority (the *Romans in Britain* fracas). His leadership of the fight for subsidised theatre finally endeared him to his former enemies.

His parting shot — and parting gift — of three last plays of Shakespeare shows him as characteristically erratic; by turns brilliant, or merely reliable, or awfully plodding. *The Winter's Tale,* generally delivered as a rant, on a set that frequently obstructs the action, falls into the last category.

The Tempest, impressively angry, but rarely magical, is workaday Hall, still better than most people. *Cymbeline,* after the departure in a huff (a Hallmark) of Sarah Miles, reveals new greatness in her replacement, Geraldine James, and an exquisite blending of theatrical elements. Even here, the uglinesses are not shirked: an abiding characteristic of perhaps our least charismatic but most useful theatrical magus. □

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Soviet Freedom

Anthony Barnett, Oxford
Is Professor Keane (*NS* 20 May) trying to say something?

His dotty travesty of *Soviet Freedom* hardly makes sense. I don't argue that the British left should put its shoulder to Gorbachev's wheel — how could we? Or that we should "put our trust in reform Communism" — which has yet to exist! Or that there has been a "great victory for the forces of honest-tongued democracy" — I suggest, and fear, that the reformers will meet a terrible defeat. I emphasise that "The destiny of democracy in the USSR rests with the people not the Party" (p. 110).

Far from ignoring the democratic impulse of rock groups and dissidents, the former have a chapter to themselves while my co-author Nella Bielski emphasises the historic role of "those who think otherwise". Keane deploys against us the pun that after *perestroika* there will be *perestrelka* (ie shooting). But he lifts the joke from — guess where? — *Soviet Freedom* (p. 113).

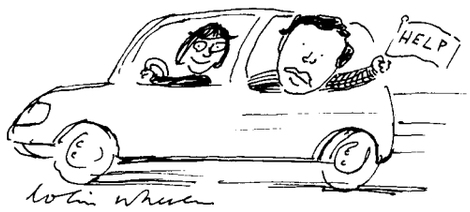
Keane also claims that I "believe what the Gorbachev group says", since I write in *Soviet Freedom* that "The Soviets have so far avoided the corruption of public language now found in the West". Thus according to Keane I think their politicians are honest while ours are not.

However, his quote comes from my chapter on the vile destruction of political language in Russia. My previous paragraph indeed states that, alongside its welcome frankness, Gorbachev's attempt to unite word and deed "finds an ominous predecessor in Stalin". The corruption of public language in the West which I refer to is nothing less — or more — than Murdoch-style pollution of our press.

After a thousand words of getting me wrong Keane concludes that for his part he will wish Gorbachev luck and call for more than *perestroika*. Who doesn't? Surely there is more to Keane's view than this. So why don't we have a public discussion about Soviet reform and civil society, after the June Conference?

Ungrateful hussy — Ed.

Jane Thomas, London N5
What a charming but old-fashioned tribute to me (*NS* 20 May).



It read like the final paragraph from *The Wilder Shores of Love* (Lesley Blanch, pub. 1954). Come, come *NS*, things have changed since *NS* colleagues, among other famous feminists, fought the battle for equality with men: I wasn't thrown across the pommel of anyone's saddle to be galloped away with into the sunset. In common with even Mills & Boon heroines these days, I got into my (Peugeot) soft top and drove myself across the river. But thank you for all the happy years.

A policy of murder

Anthony Arblaster, Sheffield
I was surprised that Duncan Campbell, in his excellent article on the Gibraltar killings (*NS* 13 May), did not make the surely obvious link with the killings at the Iranian Embassy in 1980, discussed in your editorial of 8 April. On both occasions the SAS were sent in, on the orders of the Prime Minister. And it is becoming increasingly clear that on both occasions the "terrorists" involved were murdered in cold blood by the SAS in circumstances which made that killing entirely unnecessary.

No doubt this tells us something about the SAS, which seems to be little more than a hit squad legitimated by the wearing of state uniforms. But it tells us even more about our present Prime Minister, does it not? It tells us, I suggest, that as far as she is concerned, those whom she designates as terrorists, who do not include the professional assassins employed by, for example, the Israeli and South African states, do not need to be brought to trial for what they have done or are planning to do, but can and should be shot dead as and when the occasion arises. In other words it is acceptable to murder terrorists in the same way as they murder others.

This policy of murder, carried out by the SAS, is the Prime Minister's policy, and it is this that she is attempting to conceal by her ranting attacks on "trial by television" and its supposed threat to "the rule of law". The sheer brazenness of this almost takes the breath away. It is not law but lawlessness to the point of unlawful killing that she is seeking to conceal and defend, and she is herself the inspirer and inventor of this lawless brutality. Does the Labour front bench fail to see what is happening, or does it simply lack the nerve to oppose it?

Every woman's right

Judith Rogers SCM, Independent Midwife, Worcs
While Pamela Holmes has raised many important issues about current trends in the maternity services (*NS* 6 May), her statement that women may no longer have the option of a home confinement is incorrect.

A woman is entitled to deliver in the place of her choice (unless of course it's a GP unit that's been closed) and the NHS is obliged to provide her with midwifery care during her pregnancy, birth, and for one month afterwards. Unfortunately there is

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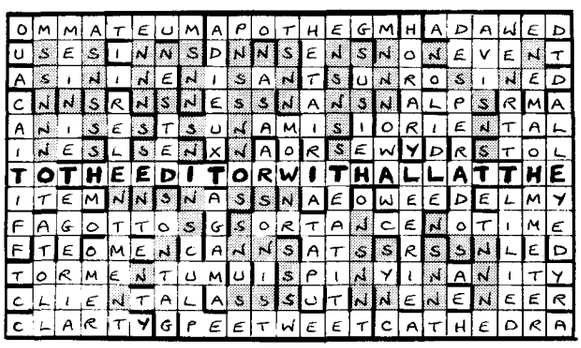

Title: "Birthday Wish"; (Centre line) "To the Editor, with all at the (Keywords) New Statesman, (N & S shaded) Happy 75th".

Prizewinners to Salamanca 133

Jean M. Gordon (Paris)
Leila Eveleigh (Bristol)
Mr W.A. Rankin (Watford, Herts.)
E.H. Ashton (Sheffield)
Mark Allen (Manchester)
John M. Brown (Burton-on-Trent,)
L.M. Keet (London N1)
R.J. Hall (Harpenden, Herts.)
Roy S. Johnson (Brunei)
E.S. Ellis (London N4)

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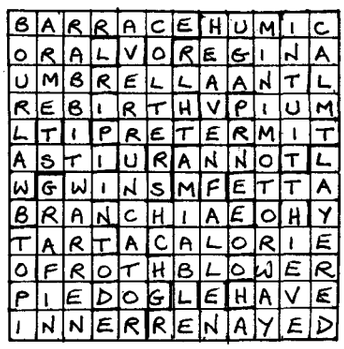

Prizewinners to Salamanca 134

Derek Cox
(Nottingham)
Mr J.D. Cooper
(Newcastle Upon Tyne)
D. Wright
(Cheltenham)

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no obligation on the NHS to provide a midwife who is keen on home births, or who will provide continuity of care — the two main reasons why women are choosing independent midwives in this country today.

The Association of Radical Midwives has published proposals for the future of the maternity services which would provide continuity of care for all childbearing women whether they choose to deliver in hospital or at home. (Copies of *The Vision* £1.25 from ARM, 62 Greetby Hill, Ormskirk, Lancs. L39 2DT.) As with most changes in maternity care, it will only succeed with massive pressure from women, the media, and midwives who really want to do the job for which they've been trained. Childbearing women have a right to midwifery care in the place of their choice, though many people — doctors and midwives — keep them ill-informed of this. Isn't it about time women had a right to know who would be attending them for one of the most important experiences of their lives?

Perdition vs the RSC

David Widy

The cover of your issue of 13 May offers readers "*Perdition*: what the fuss was about" but this article was omitted from the copy I purchased which contained only a tetchy notice by your theatre reviewer of Jim Allen's "piece of agitprop" which compares it unfavourably to the current RSC production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Victoria Radin's piece hardly merits the word review since it concentrates on lines omitted from the staged production and has clearly prejudged the play as "hectoring and sensationalising". But the impression clearly given is that *Perdition* deserves its suppression.

Having seen both productions, can I disagree? The Barbican *Merchant of Venice*, although lavish in hose and business, is, apart from Sher's outstanding performance, routine RSC-Royal Insurance fare to the usual well upholstered and complacent audience. Far from raising the audience's understanding, on the night I saw it Portia's racial rejection of her black suitor was greeted with a roar of approval. *Perdition*, after international controversy and despite verbal support of many cultural notables, has been eventually staged with difficulty by a director who has abandoned her professional legal work to allow us the chance to evaluate a play which has been vigorously attacked in a blatant piece of theatrical censorship. The production therefore finds its home not in a theatre but in a secular meeting hall and would deserve support over the issue of censorship alone. It is also, in my opinion, a considerable artistic and political success treating complex and painful issues with remarkable fairness and rigour.

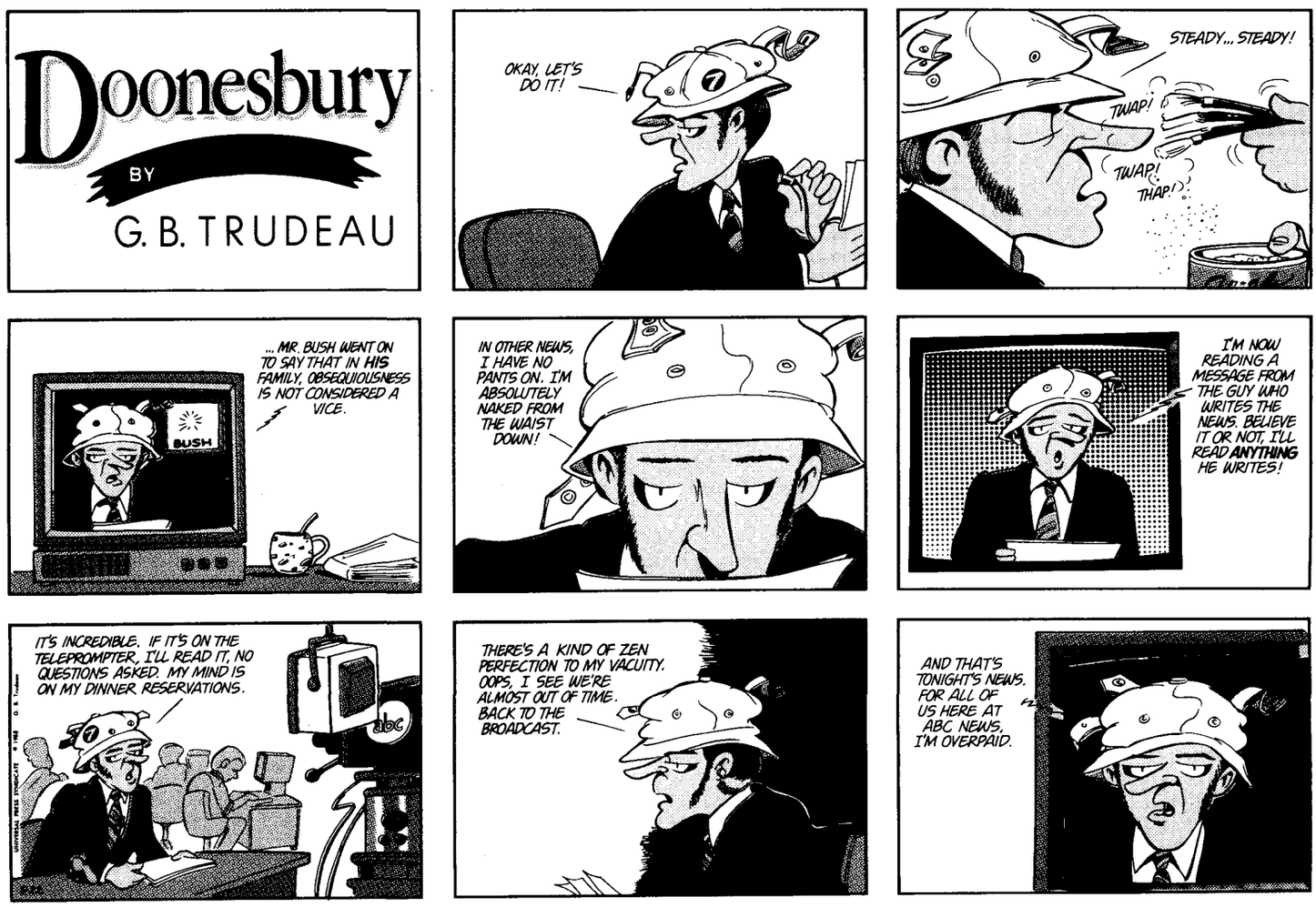
Radin's "review" is not just unhelpful to those who have defended the play without the opportunity of seeing it. It is incongruous in a journal which makes so much of its dissenting spirit, defiance of censorship and its ability to "speak the awkward or unpopular truth".

Victoria Radin writes: Widy invokes the canard of censorship as if by itself it could gain credibility for *Perdition*. *Perdition* was not censored, but withdrawn from the Royal Court by its artistic director who called it a "dishonest piece of writing", "distorted and distressingly incomplete". Other theatres remained unconvinced of the play's integrity. *Perdition* has been consistently panned by commentators, both in its original and vastly amended form. Speaking the truth (an "awkward" and greatly "unpopular" truth for these pages) it is precisely what I have tried to do.

Have you heard, it's in the stars

Laurel Lyon, London NW6

I'm glad Professor Hirst points out that astrology was seen as absurd in the 17th century (*NS* 13 May) — also a peak period for religious wars and the burning of witches. However, Isaac Newton, when twitted about his professed belief in astrology replied: "Sir, I have studied the subject; you have not." To be useful, astrology must be based on an accurate and detailed birth-chart, not merely on sun-signs as in newspaper horoscopes; transiting planets can indicate probable future trends, but its


Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
OKAY, LET'S DO IT!
STEADY... STEADY!
TWAP!
TWAP!
THAP!
BUSH
... MR. BUSH WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN HIS FAMILY, OBSEQUIOUSNESS IS NOT CONSIDERED A VICE.
IN OTHER NEWS, I HAVE NO PANTS ON. I'M ABSOLUTELY NAKED FROM THE WAIST DOWN!
I'M NOW READING A MESSAGE FROM THE GUY WHO WRITES THE NEWS. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I'LL READ ANYTHING HE WRITES!
IT'S INCREDIBLE. IF IT'S ON THE TELEPROMPTER, I'LL READ IT, NO QUESTIONS ASKED. MY MIND IS ON MY DINNER RESERVATIONS.
abc
THERE'S A KIND OF ZEN PERFECTION TO MY VACUITY. OOPS, I SEE WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF TIME. BACK TO THE BROADCAST.
AND THAT'S TONIGHT'S NEWS. FOR ALL OF US HERE AT ABC NEWS, I'M OVERPAID.

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real value is in character analysis, preferably in open discussion with the subject, examining conscious and unconscious elements of the personality and suggesting ways of approaching or dealing with problems; as such it can be combined with Jungian psychotherapy, for instance. I don't attempt to explain it; empirically it works. Astrology used like this discounts free will substantially less than, say, Freudianism or Christianity, and carries no burden of guilt.

Ronald Reagan is quite terrifying enough as a fundamentalist, with a world view that encourages indifference to democracy, dissent and human rights by dividing the world into "good" and "evil". There is no need to convince us of Reagan's dangerousness by rubbishing a potential tool for human understanding.

Owen's third

Matthew Huntbach, Young Liberals, London E13
The David Owen Party consists of less than one third of the old SDP which in turn was about one third of the Alliance. All but a fraction of the Alliance vote is dependent on the level of local activity, but David Owen's support consists largely of the inactive mail-order members of the SDP. The fact that the low level of support for the Owenites in the local elections surprised even the *New Statesman* (*NS* 13 May) indicates how this man has bedevilled third-party politics.

A sixth of the Liberal Party would have been the same size as the Owenites, but what would the press coverage have been had the split been this way? A few silly comments on beards and wind-powered yoghurt, and pages on the new unity of the Alliance with David Owen already presumed to be the leader.

The opinion poll showings for the Owenites are almost entirely due to the frequent use by the press (the *New Statesman* included) of "SDP" to mean the Alliance as a whole, and its collaboration with David Owen's theft of this title from the party which merged with the Liberals. Many supporters of the merged party must have been misled into replying "SDP" to the opinion pollsters. The better than expected results for the SLD in the elections were the result of the pleasant surprise for many electors of finding that despite the pro-Owenite rubbish in their newspapers, in most areas it was business as usual for the Liberals.

Think-tank

Michael Ward, Director, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Manchester
Your edition of 13 May carried an interesting article by John Lloyd on the prospects for a "think tank" of the left.

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies was established by a group of local authorities in 1985, to act as an economic "think tank" for concerned councils. It is not politically aligned, and numbers among its members hung councils and Conservative councils as well as Labour-controlled authorities. John Lloyd sets an interesting agenda: many of the topics — regional policy, urban policy, race and public sector management and efficiency, for example, are included in our current programme of work. We welcome any new initiative and look forward to co-operating with it.

Appeal

John Beatie, 116 Farmcombe Rd, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Most left-wing intellectuals would agree that Mrs Thatcher's ideas are simplistic, morally and intellectually deficient, and, increasingly, authoritarian and extreme. This perception, however, still seems to have no widespread following. In other words there is yet no general appreciation that Thatcherites do not have a blueprint for a united, happy and prosperous Britain. So their ruthless determination to obliterate rival ideas moves forward without coherent, sustained opposition.

A clear, vigorous and sustained critique of everything that is wrong with Thatcherism seems overdue. There has of course been much useful material in the vein over the years in the *New Statesman*. However, I do not get the impression that either in its old or new form there is a desire to concentrate on it exclusively. The aim should surely be a campaign within and without the Labour Party to arouse the intelligentsia, professions, churches, the whole of middle England, to recognise the dangers we face.

Will those who agree please write to me, with details of skills and resources, so that we can consider together if we can arrange to provide additional material.

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APPOINTMENTS

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OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

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As a progressive and caring Inner London Council, an essential part of our work is keeping the community informed of important issues, both local and national, that affect them. These can vary from a planning application to housing grants or the poll tax. Arising from this we have two vacancies, each to supervise a small section dealing with press and publicity and public relations respectively.

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ISLINGTON COUNCIL

AGENDA

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THE SHARPEVILLE SIX MUST GO FREE! Rally on the Non-Stop Picket of the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square. Every Wednesday 6pm-7.30pm.

WED 1 JUNE

SEVENTEENTH CHORLEY LECTURE. Professor Rosalyn Higgins QC will lecture on "Human Rights: Some Questions of Integrity", at 5.30 pm in the Founders' Room, London School of Economics. Admission free without ticket.

SAT 11 JUNE

COMMUNIST PARTY BOOK AND RECORD SALE — at the Africa Centre, 38 King Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2. 11am-4pm. Many bargains. All welcome.

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The results will be announced in next week's issue of the ***New Statesman***

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Weekend competition

No 3027 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Bearing in mind how *well* you all did in the comp on misleading advice to tourists, we'd like more misleading advice to those poor gullible souls starting up the career ladder — fledgling MPs, brain surgeons, solicitors, chefs (magazine editors perhaps?), or any other occupation you can think of. Max. 160 words to be in by 8 June.

No 3024 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Extracts from astounding book titles.

Report **by Lord Lucan**

Buenos Aires

How d'yer do? Thought I ought to introduce m'self first. Never could stand bad manners. And there's a lot of it about — p'lice after me at one point! Had to leave the old country pronto. Kept in touch with one old chum though. Heard I was a bit short of the readies, rang me up, and bob's your uncle, here I am. And jolly good fun too! A bit dodgy, I thought, that *Where I Went Wrong* by Margaret Thatcher, but still, a joke's a joke I s'pose. £12 to Dereli and Joseph. The rest get £7. Special mentions to Paterson, Norman and Marks. On yes, don't worry, Mater, I'm having a grand time — saw old Tubby last week. Sends you his best.

Where I Went Wrong by Margaret Thatcher

Well, of course, I didn't go wrong. We just hoped that the misleading title would persuade you to buy the book! If we don't lead the way in the enterprise culture, who will?

The British people know that I am right. I'm sure you will have enjoyed the debates in the cabinet recently. You will have recognised at once that they were for the benefit of those other voters who we are wooing for your sake.

Frankly, trying to appear to be wrong is one of the hardest tasks I have had to face. But I look forward to being able to abandon these political expediencies, and being able to speak out plainly to you. I'm confident my policies will soon have made those cosmetic debates unnecessary. . .

CYNTHIA DERELI

Kinnock: The Years of Silence

If 1987 had been the year the policy was hatched, 1988 saw its full subtle flowering. Throughout 1988 Neil deliberately said nothing about anything. He had thought it through with ruthless clarity. To speak, to open one's mouth for even a second, was to risk, in Roy Hattersley's expressive Yorkshire phrase, "putting one's Michael in it". Leave that, he decided, to Margaret Thatcher.

And the policy had worked. Triumphantly. The more she teased, the more she baited him, the more firmly he pressed his lips together, and the more flustered she became in response. By the end of the year one question above all others dominated her mind: should the Tories follow suit and introduce a policy of silence too?

TONY JOSEPH

Edith Sitwell as Jazz Trombonist

Nobody who heard Easy Edie stomping her way through *Wheels* in 1921 could ever forget the raucous, calico-tearing quality of her attack. Leaning back a little as trombonists do, with eyes closed and those few strands of hair escaping from their Grecian knot, she laid into the final chorus with a vulgarity which was truly magnificent. Her *Facade Parade* was full of South Ramparts exuberence, though there were moments of subtlety in the development section which showed the influence of Big Willy Walton, who taught her so much.

ALISON PRINCE

Preface to The London Underground Northern Line Timetable

This timetable has been rewritten according to a broad restatement of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. Please note the following:

1. Knowledge of a train moving on the Line makes it impossible to tell at which station it will next appear.
2. Observation of a train at a station means that one cannot say when, where or if it will move.
3. The role of the observer is crucial — for instance, the more passengers awaiting a train, the less chance there is of one arriving.
4. These effects are most pronounced at velocities approaching that of light. It therefore follows that (contrary to popular belief) Northern Line Underground trains are the fastest in the world.

PAUL HENDERSON

1001 Easy Ways to Win NS Competitions

No.999: Always use a pseudonym. An analysis of past competitions proves that the most imaginative names win. We suggest you try Petty, Fagg, Woddis, Sidesaddle, Parrott, Gracechurch, Ransome-Davies or a composite: e.g. Norman Petty Ransome-Parrott. Or try something completely different like Doone Shakespoon.

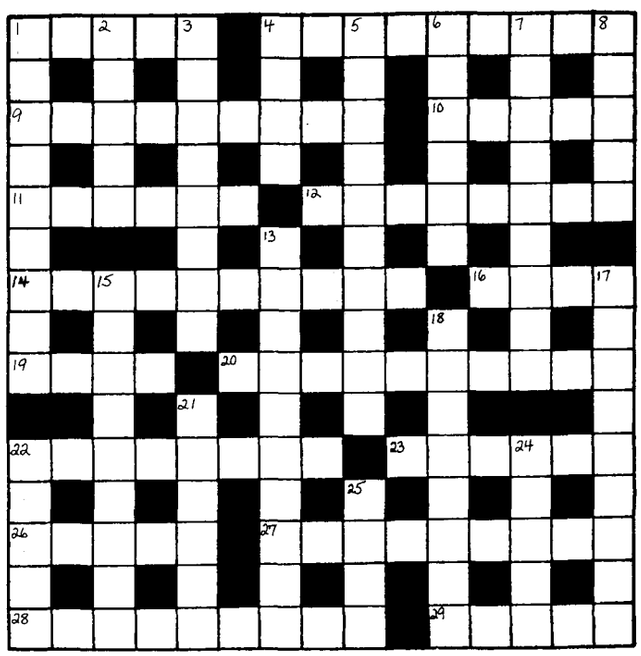
No.1000: Make sure you address the envelope correctly. It's amazing how many *NS* entries go astray or end up in a rival publication.

No.1001: Never give up. There was a man from Bristol who entered 463 times without *once* being mentioned; when he went to live in London he won four times in a row.

JOHN O'BYRNE

Weekend Crossword 1596

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1596, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post 13 June.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

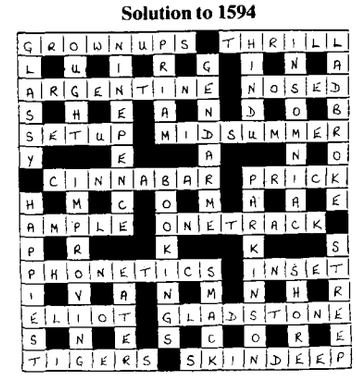
1. Champion name for a bird (5)
4. One who is 'easy, debonair and brisk' (9)
9. For example a bit of ceremony is almost completed in naked darkness (9)
10. Crime for which priest is beheaded (5)
11. Value the opposite of what the West never does (6)
12. Delay caused when the cooking utensils are put back by the servant (8)
14. Tale in which gear is given to youth on mountain (5,5)
16. Lake for fish (4)
19. Requirement in nine editors out of ten (4)
20. God has nothing in his claws for comic characters (10)
22. Communication about high-class property (8)
23. Where ducks hold their drink (6)
26. Practice which makes the medical man unfit (5)
27. Part of book which gives the bird to a book's hero (9)
28. Heroine who makes me tell a story about a novelist (9)
29. Man who puts a decoration into words (5)

DOWN

1. Dependents discovers a child below the woods (9)
2. It sounds like a piece of ceremony for the Tories (5)
3. I put in some money for a piece of meat (8)
4. Score which may be made when there is nothing in the covers? (4)
5. The voters have to choose and there is nothing to evaluate (10)
6. The winners have tea with the members (6)
7. Sign of manhood, much as it is spoilt by love (9)
8. Moment for the unorthodox? (5)
13. Tear things to pieces to make them look right? (10)
15. There is excess population when couples lose their heads over a contraceptive (9)
17. Entertainment extremely suited to exploration (9)
18. Gear for the unsteady? (8)
21. Abroad he is surrounded by signs of spring and makes his nest (6)
22. Woman, you can have it both ways! (5)
24. Provide fresh weapons for a number at the back (5)
25. Painful feature of last year's harvest (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1594



Prizewinners to 1594

Mr P.W. McCombie (London E3)
Mrs Manuela Armitage (Sheffield)
Mr G. Smith (Warley, West Midlands)

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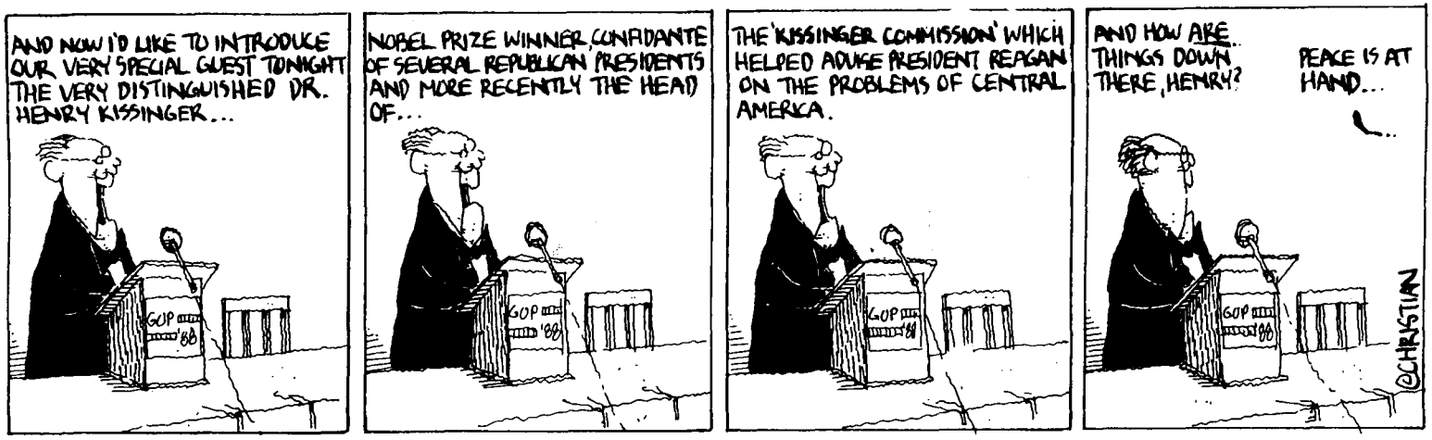
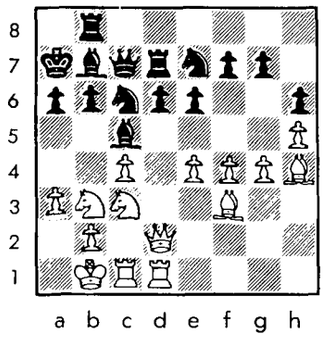

AND NOW I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE OUR VERY SPECIAL GUEST TONIGHT THE VERY DISTINGUISHED DR. HENRY KISSINGER...
NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, CONFIDANTE OF SEVERAL REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTS AND MORE RECENTLY THE HEAD OF...
THE 'KISSINGER COMMISSION' WHICH HELPED ADVISE PRESIDENT REAGAN ON THE PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL AMERICA.
AND HOW ARE THINGS DOWN THERE, HENRY?
PEACE IS AT HAND...
GOP '88
©CHRISTIAN

Chess

Kasparov-van der Wiel: White to play his 26th



CHESS tournaments are created exceedingly unequal. At the bottom of the pile come the Swiss-system weekend Opens. These provide an entry to the competitive scene for the candidate master, or for that matter anyone at all who pays the entry fee. What fierce struggles are fought in their matey atmosphere over a few quid in prize-money! Unfortunately, the playing conditions too often seem to be the product of a deliberate attempt to symbolise all that is meant by the survival of the fittest — upwards of three 4-hour sessions in a day, elbow-room that a battery hen would cluck at, and, by way of so-called "refreshments", ghastly parodies of normal human provender from which all nutrients are rigorously excluded.

Tournaments restricted to invited players are altogether more pleasant, at least for the elite who can expect to get such invitations. England now has plenty of players whose services are in demand abroad, but we still suffer from a dearth of high-quality tourneys at home. If only we could do these things as well as the Dutch, whose invitations are so handsomely guildered. Their latest event — sponsored by Optiebeurs (I don't know who they are, but I'm sure they've paid for that space) — is a Holland-USSR match-tournament, in which Timman and van der Wiel are going to make what fist they can of taking on Kasparov and Karpov. In principle the format is not promising: at the internation level a foregone conclusion, whilst at the personal level the two Ks will surely leave the settling of accounts to a time when the stage is clear of any makeweights or supporting cast. But it's still a delight to see a world champion so happy in his work as Kasparov was in the first round:

Kasparov-van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1988. Queen's Indian.
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3, Nf3 b6 4. a3 Ba6 5. Qc2 Bb7 6. Nc3 c5 7. e4 cxd4 8. Nxd4 Bc5 Personally I find this fundamentalist position quite incongruous for a contemporary Bishop. Isn't it time to stop dreaming that a miracle will happen on f2 and be content with a cosy little diocese on e7? **9. Nb3 Nc6 10. Bg5 a6 11. 0-0-0 Qc7 12. Kb1 0-0-0** We are now to be treated to a text-book illustration of how to make the most of a spatial advantage. The strike at move 26 catches the eye, but what really does the business is the way Kasparov sets it up by gradual encroachment. **13. Qd2 d6 14. f3 h6 15. Bf4 Ne5 16. h4 Kb8 17. h5 Rd7 18. Rc1 Rc8 19. Be2 Ka7 20. Rhd1 Rdd8 21. g4 Ng8 22. Bg3 Ne7 23. f4 N5c6 24. Bf3 Rb8 25. Bh4 Rd7?** See diagram. The Dutch GM has made the sort of oversight that is almost inevitable when you don't have enough good squares for your pieces. **26. Nb5+! axb5 27. cxb5 Na5** If 27...Nd8 28. Rc4!, e.g. 28...Bc8 29. Ra4+ Kb7 30. Bxe7 Rxe7 31. e5+ d5 32. Bxd5+ exd5 33. Qxd5+ Nc6 34. bxc6+ Qxc6 35. Ra7+. **28. Nxa5 bxa5 29. Rxc5! dxc5** Or 29...Qxc5 30. Bf2. **30. Qxd7 Qxf4 31. Rd6 1-0.** As a finishing touch Kasparov reveals his killer-instinct in the variations 31...Rc8 32. Ra6+ Kb8 33. Bxe7 and 31...Ka8 32. Qc7! Bxe4+ 33. Ka2.

At least there is one high-class event that Britain can hardly wriggle out of holding this year — the Short v Speelman world championship quarter-final. The plan is to hold this match, which is (and blame FIDE for this, rather than the penny-pinching of British sponsorship) to be over the indecently short course of six games, in the Barbican Centre in mid-August.

One of the main factors in deciding which English GM progresses to the semi-finals will be Speelman's success, or otherwise, in finding an adequate defence to Nigel Short's 1. e4. Although Jon usually relies on the Caro-Kann, he might also give the Pirc-Modern a whirl, which means that both players will have to give some thought to Seirawan's important innovation:

Sax-Seirawan, SWIFT World Cup 1988: 1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. f4 Bg7 5. Nf3 c5 6. Bb5+ Bd7 7. e5 Ng4 8. e6 fxe6!? Here the invariable choice had been 8...Bxb5 9. exf7+ Kd7 with the main line continuing 10. Nxb5 Qa5+ 11. Nc3 cxd4 12. Nxd4 Bxd4 13. Qxd4 Nc6 14. Qc4 etc. Of course, Black does not want to play with his King on d7. But otherwise Ng5-e6 is going to be strong, isn't it? **9. Ng5 Bxb5 10. Nxe6 Bxd4! 11. Nxd8** I don't think White has an improvement. If 11. Qxg4 Bxc3+ 12. bxc3 Bd7. If 11. Nxd4 Black has a choice between 11...Bd7 and 11...cxd4 12. Qxd4 e5 13. fxe5 Qd7. **Bf2+ 12. Kd2 Be3+** ½-½. OK, so perhaps miracles do still happen on f2. Seirawan only clocked up 8 minutes for the whole game, making it a safe bet that he was assured of the soundness of Black's play before he came to the board.

I suspect Speelman will keep away from the theoretical tracks and plunge into the wilderness. That would be the canniest policy, not least because that incomparable analyst John Nunn will once again be acting as Short's second. Having thus dragged Nunn's name in, I get the chance to add that if you missed his *Tactical Chess Endings* when first published (1981) by Allen & Unwin don't overlook the new Batsford reprint.

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

☐ Miss Sarah Fernley-Whittingstall, defending, said her client was not a drug addict and produced the cannabis "merely out of curiosity and not to obtain narcotics. His initial purpose was to use the poppies in dried flower arrangements," she said. "There is no question of supply or of commercial use." — *Stroud Observer* (A Parker)

☐ Prudential Assurance, which last month cleared a group of teenage punks from the shopping centre in Basingstoke, Hants, because they did not display "acceptable standards of behaviour", has now ordered the Women's Institute to remove a sandwich board advertising home-made jam. — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

☐ British Rail has cut the train fare for a journey in Norfolk after a passenger worked out a cheaper route. Mrs Maureen Long found it was 30p cheaper to buy a ticket from North Walsham to Cromer and then another from Cromer to Sheringham than it was to pay the direct fare of £3. — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

☐ An assistant manning the ticket office at Bignor Roman Villa in Sussex was handing out tickets to two elderly women the other day. "Are you seniors?" she asked. "You could say that," replied one of them, "but we prefer to be called Ancient Britons". — *Financial Times* (David Bays)

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LINES OF DISSENT

Writing from the *New Statesman*

1913 to 1988

Published to mark the 75th birthday of the *New Statesman, Lines of Dissent* collects some of the most powerful, the most controversial, and a little of the most eccentric writing from throughout the magazine's history. For three-quarters of a century now, the *NS* has been a central but perpetually dissident part of British political life. Almost every major figure in modern British politics and culture, and many from outside, has appeared in its columns. This anthology, whilst concentrating on the immense range and richness of the *NS*'s interventions in political debate – from eyewitness accounts of war and revolution to meditations on the future of socialism, also includes an exciting selection of artistic and cultural coverage.

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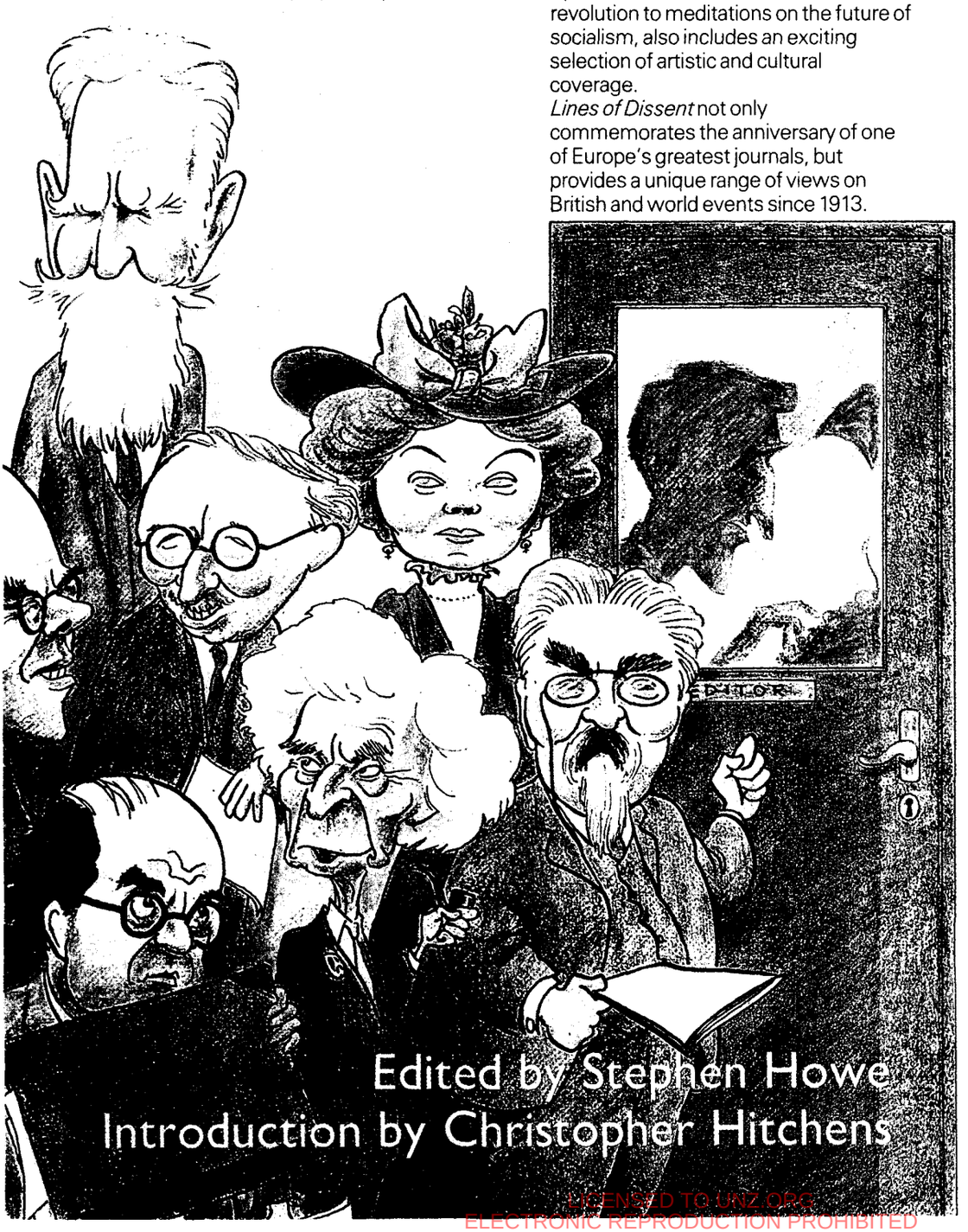

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